

BARBARA BENNETT: MAYOR OF RENO AND COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

Interviewee: Barbara Bennett

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Description

Barbara Bennett was born in 1923 in Oakland, California. Her oral history begins with a heartbreaking description of her early years there. Despite poverty, ill-treatment and neglect she survived and became more resilient, independent and strong. She describes leaving home at the age of thirteen and becoming self-supporting. She worked for caring people who insisted that she complete her education. College plans didn't work out because of World War II, and Barbara Bennett went to work in Bay Area defense plants. When the war ended she lost her job and her independence, like so many other women, to returning servicemen. She realized that it was a "man's world" at that time.

She married John Bennett, a returning serviceman, and continued to live in Oakland, where she and John started their family—two daughters and a son. Their family was first and foremost in her life, and no decisions affecting the family were made unilaterally. In 1964 the Bennetts moved to Reno, and Barbara went to work for the telephone company. While she scored well on company examinations, she was unsuccessful in getting promotions. This experience, among others, led her to become interested in issues and causes. This was when affirmative action for minorities was beginning, but before people over forty had started organizing over age-related injustices in the workplace.

In 1970, armed with statistics proving discrimination, Bennett again applied for a promotion, but to no avail. While she had what was probably a winning case of discrimination in court, she couldn't afford to fight it, and she eventually left the phone company. Since then the company has made strides in improving conditions for women in her age bracket; her determination and plain stubbornness helped bring about changes to benefit other people.

Injustice to herself and to others eventually led Barbara Bennett to become active in women's issues and ultimately to be instrumental in forming the Nevada Women's Political Caucus. The Equal Rights Amendment was at the forefront of women's issues, and the Women's Political Caucus wanted to secure male and female candidates who grasped the issues of women in the workplace and women in their homes. Through these efforts, the city of Reno and Washoe County had female members on various boards, and eventually had several women city and county commissioners.

Nevada's racial minorities are another group whose lives have been touched because Barbara Bennett couldn't stand the injustices meted out to them. She describes her feeling when the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. Once more she marched on another cause and fought racial discrimination in housing and jobs.

In the early 1970s, the Bennetts moved from their house into a mobile home—they wanted a home they could afford in retirement. Unfortunately, mobile home park landlords in Nevada became greedy, forcing some retirees out of their mobile homes because of "atrocious" increases in rates for space. Barbara Bennett founded the Nevada Homeowners Association, and through this group righted many of the wrongs.

(Continued on next page.)

Description (continued)

By this time, Barbara Bennett had attained the name recognition necessary to run for public office. Hers was a name not always popular with special interest groups, but she had a public profile. Bennett ran for county commissioner in 1975 and was defeated. In 1977, she ran for Reno City Council and lost again, but in 1979 she ran for mayor of Reno and won. Barbara Bennett was a formidable opponent at all times because she was so well prepared for the task at hand. She was honest and the people knew it; even her opponents acknowledged that she had no price tag. Bennett opposed the enormous campaign contributions provided by special interest groups, and accepted none. She was truly of the people.

In this oral history Mrs. Bennett provides a detailed history of the problems Washoe County and Reno faced in the 1970s to 1980s. She is exceptionally candid in her descriptions of the people she encountered along the way and the people she worked with as an elected official. Barbara Bennett has long been affiliated with Common Cause, both locally and nationally, and has brought a lot of pride to members of the organization. She has received formal recognition of her good work at local and national levels.

In his 1820 sketch, "The Wife," Washington Irving wrote: "There is in every true woman's heart a spark of heavenly fire, which lies dormant in the broad daylight of prosperity, but which kindles up and beams and blazes in the dark hour of adversity." Mr. Irving must have known someone very much like Barbara Bennett when he was inspired to write those words.

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An Oral History Conducted by Lenore M. Kosso
Edited by Helen M. Blue and R.T. King

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

ORIGINAL PREFACE

Since 1965 the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) has produced over 200 works similar to the one at hand. Following the precedent established by Allan Nevins at Columbia University in 1948 (and perpetuated since by academic programs such as ours throughout the English-speaking world) these manuscripts are called oral histories. Unfortunately, some confusion surrounds the meaning of the term. To the extent that these 'oral' histories can be read, they are not oral, and while they are useful historical sources, they are not themselves history. Still, custom is a powerful force; historical and cultural records that originate in tape-recorded interviews are almost uniformly labeled 'oral histories', and our program follows that usage.

Among oral history programs, differences abound in the way information is collected, processed and presented. At one end of a spectrum are some that claim to find scholarly value in interviews which more closely resemble spontaneous encounters than they do organized efforts to collect

information. For those programs, any preparation is too much. The interviewer operates the recording equipment and serves as the immediate audience, but does not actively participate beyond encouraging the chronicler to keep talking. Serendipity is the principal determinant of the historical worth of information thus collected.

The University of Nevada's program strives to be considerably more rigorous in selecting chroniclers, and in preparing for and focusing interviews. When done by the UNOHP, these firsthand accounts are meant to serve the function of primary source documents, as valuable in the process of historiography as the written records with which historians customarily work. However, while the properly conducted oral history is a reliable source, verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the UNOHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, and that the chronicler has approved the edited manuscript, but it

does not assert that all are entirely free of error. Accordingly, our oral histories should be approached with the same caution that the prudent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries and other sources of historical information.

Each finished manuscript is the product of a collaboration—its structure influenced by the directed questioning of an informed, well-prepared interviewer, and its articulation refined through editing. While the words in this published oral history are essentially those of Mrs. Bennett, the text is not a *verbatim* transcription of the interview as it occurred. In producing a manuscript, it is the practice of the UNOHP to employ the language of the chronicler, but to edit for clarity and readability. By shifting text when necessary, by polishing syntax, and by deleting or subsuming the questions of the interviewer, a first-person narrative with chronological and topical order is created. Mrs. Bennett has reviewed the finished manuscript of her oral history and affirmed in writing that it is an accurate representation of her statements.

The UNOHP realizes that there will be some researchers who prefer to take their oral history straight, without the editing that was necessary to produce this text; they are directed to the tape recording. Copies of all or part of this work and the tapes from which it is derived are available from:

The University of Nevada
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INTRODUCTION

“A sufficient measure of civilization is the influence of good women,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson in *Society and Solitude*. If Nevada’s civilization is measured by the influence Barbara Bennett has had, it will not come up wanting. However, but for the University of Nevada’s Oral History Program, Nevadans would have no way of knowing of this remarkable woman who has touched the lives of so many people in our state.

This oral history of Barbara Bennett begins with a heartbreaking description of her early years in Oakland, California, and is truly a testament to the fact that despite poverty, ill-treatment and neglect, one can survive and become more resilient, independent and strong. She describes leaving home at the age of 13 and actually becoming self-supporting. She worked for caring people who insisted that she complete her education. For the first time in her life, she was able to socialize with her peers in school and participate in extra-curricular activities.

Unfortunately, college plans didn’t work out because of World War II, and Barbara

went to work in Bay Area defense plants. When the war ended she lost her job and her independence, like so many other women, to returning servicemen. She realized that it was a “man’s world” at that time. Barbara married John Bennett, a returning serviceman, and continued to live in Oakland. She and John started their family—two daughters and a son—and both held jobs in order to participate in the American Dream. Their family was first and foremost in her life, and no decisions affecting the family were made unilaterally.

In 1964 the Bennetts moved to Reno, and Barbara went to work for the telephone company. While she scored well on company examinations, she was unsuccessful in getting promotions, and this experience, among others, led her to become interested in issues and causes. This was the period of time when affirmative action for minorities was beginning, but before people over 40 had started organizing over age-related injustices in the workplace.

In 1970, armed with statistics proving discrimination, Barbara again applied for a

promotion, but to no avail. While she had what was probably a winning case of discrimination in court, she couldn't afford to fight it, and she eventually left the telephone company. She feels that since then the company has made strides in improving conditions for women in her age bracket; her determination and plain stubbornness helped bring about changes to benefit other people.

This kind of injustice to herself and to others eventually led Barbara to become active in women's issues and ultimately to be instrumental in forming the Women's Political Caucus. And, of course, it was at this time that the Equal Rights Amendment was at the forefront of women's issues. The goal of the Women's Political Caucus was to secure good candidates, both male and female, who grasped the issues of women in the workplace and women in their homes. Several persons, both members and nonmembers of the Caucus, ran for office and won. Ultimately, through these efforts, the city of Reno and Washoe County not only had female members on the various boards, but eventually had several women city and county commissioners.

Nevada's racial minorities are another group whose lives have been touched because Barbara couldn't stand the injustices meted out to them. She describes her feeling when the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. Once more she marched on another cause and fought racial discrimination in housing, jobs and wherever it reared its bigoted head.

In the early 1970s, the Bennetts moved from their house on Keystone Avenue into a mobile home. They wanted a home they could afford in retirement. Unfortunately, mobile home park landlords in Nevada became greedy, forcing some retirees out of their mobile homes because of "atrocious" increases in rates for space. This became another cause for Barbara; she founded the

Nevada Mobile Homeowners Association, and through this group righted many of the wrongs. And here we have yet another segment of the population whose life was made better because of Barbara.

By this time, she had attained the name recognition necessary to run for public office. Hers was a name not always popular with special interest groups, but she had a public profile. It was time to enter formal politics. She ran for county commissioner in 1975 and was defeated. In 1977, she ran for Reno City Council and lost again. But in 1979, she ran for mayor of Reno and won.

Barbara was a formidable opponent at all times because she was so well prepared for the task at hand. She was honest and the people knew it; even her opponents acknowledged that she had no price tag. She opposed the enormous campaign contributions provided by special interest groups, and accepted none. She was truly "of the people."

In this oral memoir, Barbara Bennett provides, in great detail, a history of the problems Washoe County and Reno faced in the 1970s and early 1980s, and of the problems they still face. She is exceptionally candid in her descriptions of the people she encountered along the way and the people she worked with as an elected official.

Barbara has long been affiliated with Common Cause, both locally and nationally, and has brought a lot of pride to members of the organization. (She has received formal recognition of her good work at both the local and national level.) However, Barbara recently lost her husband, John, and now has a less-than-active profile in the community. While she has certainly given more than her fair share, many people are urging her to become active again and run for political office.

The last page of this oral history carries the advice that John and Barbara gave their

children: “Your family is everything. You’ve got brothers and sisters in school. Look after them, because you’re going to have your family your whole life. It’s the only thing in your life that is going to be constant if you will let it be.” That was and is the credo of the Bennett family. In his 1820 sketch, “The Wife,” Washington Irving wrote: “There is in every true woman’s heart a spark of heavenly fire, which lies dormant in the broad daylight of prosperity but which kindles up and beams and blazes in the dark hour of adversity.” Mr. Irving must have known someone very much like Barbara when he was inspired to write those words.

Leola H. Armstrong
Common Cause
March, 1989



Barbara Bennett pictured in 1982 with Common Cause chairman Archibald Cox upon the occasion of receiving the Common Cause Public Service Achievement Award. Courtesy of Barbara Bennett Collection.

FORMATIVE YEARS

I was born in Oakland California, on July 25, 1923. On my paternal side of the family, the family name was Peters. Peters is not a Portuguese name, but they were Portuguese in descent. Apparently, the family name was changed, and I didn't learn that until many years later.

I do not know to this day what it was, and I haven't really had enough interest to follow up and find out. I don't know where my grandfather was born precisely—it could've been the Azores, or it could've been Portugal—but as a young man, he came to this country from the Azores and settled in Oakland. He was ultimately killed in an accident while working for the railroad. I was quite young at that time, so I remember very little about him, outside of his shocking white hair. I do not remember my paternal grandmother at all. I don't know whether she came from the same part of the world as he, or whether he met her in Oakland.

My maternal grandparents were both Irish. My grandfather's name was Heffron.

They came from Missouri, settled in California around what we now know as the Petaluma area, and did some farming. Ultimately they left some land to a school which I don't believe operates any longer, but the land is now part of the public domain. I don't think they were well-to-do then. Even if you gave a couple of acres of land for a public cause, you didn't have to be wealthy to do so. In the 1940s and 1950s you could still buy land in the Sacramento area, the Bay Area, and throughout California for \$10, \$20 an acre. So their donation was not one given through wealth. Outside of wanting to provide a public service, I don't understand why they gave the land.

Both my parents were born in Oakland, I think...my father in 1898: I'm not sure how my mother's family got from the Petaluma area over to Oakland. The details about my family are very sketchy, because I'm from a broken home. My mother was quite young when she married—she was 18. My father, I would guess, was six or seven years older at the time, but I'm not sure. My mother and

father were divorced when I was three years old, so when I was a young child I didn't have that sense of family that a lot of people have. A lot of pieces have been put together in my head—some comes from talking to an aunt or other people in the past. But the facts are not as coherent or flowing as I would like them to be.

During the Depression era, my father was a laundry truck driver. I suppose that was nothing to sneeze at in those days, because there were many people who had no employment at all. My mother was a homemaker. I was the second born. After I was born, my sister, Norma, was born in 1925. She still lives in San Francisco. We're very close, being the only siblings remaining in the family. My parents had a son who was born before me, who died of pneumonia at nine months of age. From what I've been able to put together from my mother's sisters, my mother never adapted to the loss and apparently began to drink very heavily at that time. That is what ultimately brought about the divorce in the family. She never did recover, either, and she died very young in the county hospital in Alameda from the results of alcoholism.

Surprisingly, I've been told that people don't remember what happened to them when they were that young, but perhaps because things were rather traumatic, I do remember. I remember the divorce, and I remember that because my mother was drinking heavily, my father moved my sister and me all the way back to Buffalo, New York, for a period of time. I assume that either he did not want her to see us, or he was afraid she would come and take us, because he had been given custody of us in the divorce suit.

I don't remember who we stayed with in Buffalo, but it's strange because I can still picture the house. I assume that it was perhaps a distant relative or someone on my father's

side, but I really do not know. I can remember the house very well, because I'd never been in snow. It was so cold! [laughs]

I'll never forget that we slept in a loft with other children, and I contracted scarlet fever. This was in the days prior to antibiotics, which makes it a very simple matter now. But it really could be a very fatal disease back at that time. As a matter of fact, I apparently had a very bad case of it, and one of the results of scarlet fever in those days was the loss of hair. Some people lost all their hair, which they never regained, and I was left with a number of scars on my head where the hair just fell out.

Following that, somehow we came back to the Bay Area, and my sister and I were placed in an orphanage. I don't remember the name, but it was in Oakland. I think we must have been there about a year and a half, because I had not started school yet. I don't know why my father didn't take us back, but he was a single man at that time...who knows? He probably had no way of caring for us. I guess in due time he made arrangements with a brother and sister-in-law of his in Oakland to take my sister and me in. We were there about a year and a half. I think that I was four-and-a-half years old and I did start school while we were with this aunt and uncle. They didn't have any other children.

I had appendicitis during that time. [laughs] I remember that I was on my way home from school and apparently it hit very sharply and almost burst, and I stopped on the sidewalk. In those days, neighbors knew everyone, so they saw me. They went for my aunt and they took me to the hospital, and out came the appendix.

I really loved the time with my aunt and uncle. It was the first sense of family that I had ever really had. It's the first Christmas that I remember clearly, because I spent it in the hospital. [laughs] It was beautiful.. I

remember laughing about it because things were so silly. I guess I had a sense of adventure even then. There was a young girl about my age in the bed next to me who had been badly burned in an accident, and her legs were up to keep from touching, I guess. She dared me to get up and run to the end of the room. I suppose I couldn't resist a challenge even then, so I did it, and it was just great fun. [laughs] On Christmas Eve, all the nurses went through the halls. All the lights were turned out and they carried candles and they sang all through the halls. We had our own tree in the room and it was my first memorable Christmas. I was six then.

I was with my uncle and aunt from when I was four-and-a-half until I was seven. My Uncle Jack started me reading even before I had started school, and kept after me until I actually read him the Sunday morning comic strips. I had a good start in school, and it was good because I missed a lot of it at an earlier time. I always liked school—loved it from day one.

At seven years of age all of us at home—my sister, aunt, uncle and I—had all been expecting my father to marry a woman that we knew he'd seen for quite a period of time. All of a sudden, he surprised everyone and up and married a woman that no one had ever heard of. So there was another whole family thing there. [laughs] It came as a shock to everyone. I can't recall my thought processes at the time, but I would assume that because we all liked the other woman so well, that our future stepmother had this sort of unfavorable ranking in my opinion right from the beginning. At any rate, they were married when I was seven years of age. She had her own home in Oakland; she was divorced and Italian, but she was not active in the Catholic church. So then we went back and lived with my father and his new wife.

In rationalizing this as time passed and I got older, I think that I'd reached the conclusion that at that time my father just wanted a home for us. Maybe he felt this woman owning her own home would provide a home for us, and perhaps this other woman in his life could not offer this. But it was disastrous from the beginning. She had two sons who were considerably older than us. The youngest was about four years my senior, and the older was probably ten years my senior.

At that point in time, my father drifted somewhat away from the church, in spite of my having been baptized a Catholic. Perhaps this was because there was the divorce and things, I don't know. He became very active in the Masonic Order. He was still driving the laundry truck then. But it seemed like *countless* hours committed to the Masonic Order.

Our father spent very little time at home, and we were left with a stepmother who had become progressively more vicious. Norma and I both put up with being called stupid. My stepmother also used to beat us. The washers of those days were in the basement, and they had the hand-wringers on them. You lifted clothes out by hand and put them through these wringers. The water was real hot, so there was a very hard oak stick with about a two-inch circumference that was used to lift out the clothing. That stick seemed to be her favorite weapon.

It sounds so strange, because this kind of thing was not discussed back then. But now, because there is so much abuse going on out there, people are talking about it, and I feel free to talk about it. We were abused physically, but mainly emotionally, which had different effects on my sister and myself. Norma took years and years...she never really got over it until maybe ten years ago, which is a very long period of time. She had what

they used to call a nervous breakdown. She went through all of that and really had a very difficult time. These things affected her differently than they affected me. They made me stubborn and hard-headed...they really did. They toughened me.

We didn't dare tell my father about our stepmother abusing us, because we figured that would make things worse. I had always been so crazy about my father, but during this period of time he couldn't see the things that were happening, and if he did, he didn't seem to care enough to do anything about it. You couldn't miss some of the knots and lumps and things that appeared on us, but we didn't dare say anything. I had friends in school, but I never told anyone about anything because I was ashamed. You just don't discuss these things and you go to extremes to hide bruises...it's so weird.

As far as my aunt and uncle were concerned, when my father married this woman, all ties with both my maternal and paternal families were cut. I don't know the reason why—I don't know whether my father cut it off or whether his wife made it obvious that they were unwelcome. I know that as time went on, it was very obvious that they were entirely unwelcome. So all connections with aunts and uncles on both sides of the family—cousins, grandparents, everyone—were just severed. No one really knew what was going on. In later years I talked with my grandmother and an aunt that had tried to come to the house and visit. They said that every time they called or tried to see us, we were never told. We just felt we'd been deserted, and then found out later that that wasn't true. We were also told that they had brought Christmas gifts, which we never saw, so we don't know what happened to them.

I became more and more attached to school because it was almost an escape for me

at that point in time. I'd always loved athletics, and fortunately had a very natural flair for it, too. I wanted very much to take part in a lot of these activities at school, but we absolutely could not. Our stepmother wouldn't let us, and that showed just how petty things can be. There were always field trips in school, and students would go to the local dairies and bakeries, and that sort of thing. Whenever one of those field trips was due, we had to get a note from our parents approving them, and I never got one approved. *She* refused it, and my father never even knew about it. I don't know why she wouldn't let us go. We were also not entitled to have any friends to the home..I never had a friend in the house. We were never allowed to go to a party and never allowed to stay for after-school activities. It was just awful..

I don't know if my father and his wife got along, because I hardly remember him ever being at home—he was just gone all the time. My sister and I were *very, very* close, because we only had each other. People talk about the old, mean stepmother. I mean she was an absolute bitch! She really was. But we were instructed to call her *Mother*. We were told that that was what she was to be called.

Our clothes were hand-me-downs, which was not unusual for any family, because this was during the Depression. I know my husband has said how he was embarrassed to wear hand-me-down clothing, but I didn't know anything else...what difference did it make? It was something to wear. [laughs]

Once in junior high school some of the girls in the class were having a party—I think it was a birthday party—and I really wanted to go. I hadn't been allowed to do that sort of thing. I asked if I could go, and the answer was no, but fate intervened. Right next door to where we lived, a sister of my stepmother lived. I got along with her very well—they

raised chow dogs. As often happened, I would go over to this woman's house and sit with their dogs if they were going away, because the dogs required special feedings. It worked out because I had to go take care of the dogs on the same night the party was being held. Well, I sneaked out and off I went to the party. [laughs] My sister was with me and she went, too. During the party there was a spelling contest, which I won, and I got a quarter. It was a lot of money when you never had an allowance...it was a *ton* of money.

When we went to go home, we rounded a corner about two blocks from the house and we could see flashing lights. They had discovered, obviously, that we were missing and had called the police. My sister decided to go on and go home, and I told her to do what she wanted, but I decided this was a good time for me to leave. [laughs] Norma went straight up that street. I went around the block in the back, over a fence and down in the basement, and got a jacket and a change of clothes, and off I went.

I went no place in particular. Here I had this quarter in my pocket, and I was absolutely rich. [laughs] It was about 9:00 at night by then. I took a dime, I think, and went to a movie. I walked about two miles to town to a movie and stayed until the theater closed. Then I left and I didn't know what I was going to do. My father had a brother that lived sort of halfway between where we lived and where downtown was. (He wasn't the same uncle we had lived with.) I started to go to their place, but I knew if I went there they would call my father, and I would have to go home. So I changed my mind when I just about got there and I just wandered around the neighborhood for some place to lie down. I found a place in someone's backyard on one of those swings that go back and forth. I just crawled on the swing and went to sleep.

I woke up early the next morning and took off again. There is a famous large park, Lake Merritt, in Oakland. The weather was warm, and I went over to the park and I just spent the day gallivanting. I was really getting hungry by this time. Some of the picnics and things began to break up, and when I saw people throw something away, I went and got it. That's how I ate.

That day I took another of my dimes and went back and spent the day in the show again. By then I was *really* getting hungry.... At any rate I managed to get enough in me to survive. I was down to a nickel and bought two candy bars with that. But by the end of that day things were looking pretty bleak. I was afraid to go back and sleep in the same place again, so I went to the police station, walked in and told a policeman who I was. The policeman said, "Yes," as though he were saying, "So?..." I told him I had run away, and I was so hungry.

It was real adult jail, and so they took me into this cell and locked me up. They were very nice. Anyway, they brought me in a cup of coffee and the hardest danish that you'd ever eaten in your life. But I must have just absolutely wolfed it down. When my father and stepmother came to get me, she said she knew I'd been staying with someone, but the policeman said, "She was very hungry when she got here, so we don't think that she's been with anyone."

We left, and it was back home again to some of the same things. But I had developed a certain amount of independence during this journey, and I knew that I was not going to be staying there very long. In fact, I left there for good when I was 13 years of age. When I ran away, I know it scared Norma, but I really couldn't stay...I really just couldn't tolerate it. I was the only one that was really taking the physical beatings at that point in time, but I wouldn't cry.

What I did when I left home at 13 was to go to the newspaper ads and find a job, so I wasn't just running foolishly by then. I knew that if I was going to stay gone that I had to have a way to survive. In the newspaper I found an opening where they wanted someone to look after children, clean house, and live in. It suited me absolutely perfectly...\$8 a month and room and board. I didn't tell my father and stepmother—I just left. I told the people that were hiring me why I wanted the job and said I absolutely would not go home. I had them contact my father, and he came over and agreed to let me stay. He knew by then that I was very serious. I stayed there and went to school a couple of years, worked for them, and took care of the children. The family had two children, and the father was in the insurance business. The wife was very active in civic affairs. They really took an interest in me. Here I was on my own... lots of weird things could have happened.

I had my days off and I spent them with the two girls that I was friends with in school. I spent a lot of time with the family of a friend who died recently. Her name was Margaret. Margaret didn't have a father. There was a mother, a grandmother and an aunt all living in the same house with her, and they sort of took me in. I was either at their home, or back where I lived with the family whose children I watched. This was clear on the other end of town from where my father lived.

I don't know how many miles I walked...it had to be at least three or four miles to high school because I could only afford a ticket for bus fare one way. So I was up very early in the morning and walked to school. They made sure that I went to school, and they saw my report cards and signed them and followed up on things. They exerted some discipline when it was necessary, and some reasoning—a great

deal of that. They were very influential in my life at that time.

By then I was in Technical High in Oakland, and I had never told the teachers about my situation. But I think my friend, Margaret, had told them of my situation—how I got in it. Then they began to take an interest in me. When I was about eight or nine years old, my front tooth had broken off, and it was a permanent tooth. By the time I was in high school, it had turned black, and it made me very self-conscious. I was always smiling in a rather strange way, and this gym teacher took an interest in me and sent me to her dentist to have it fixed. She *strongly* urged me to keep up my grades and go to college. I really wanted to do just that.

When I was 17, I took another job working for a different family in Oakland. The father was a doctor. Usually no one hired kids until they were 18—I suppose it was a hangover from the Depression. I stayed with them until I was all through high school.

After I had left home and was on my own, I was able to stay and take part in a lot of after-school activities. I was a cheerleader for the Girls' Athletic Association for some time, and in my final year I was president of that group. We had a large "conference" of all the Girls' Athletic Association's schools in the Oakland area, and that was my first real experience before a large group. We just had a wonderful time. I was active in just about all kinds of sports.

Because I had wanted to go to college, obviously I had to take what were then called college-prep courses, so I took all the required subjects in science, language, math, and English. I was a good student, but nothing outstanding. But the freedom that I was enjoying at that point in time didn't permit me to put all the time in studying that I should have. [laughs] I was enjoying this freedom for

the first time in my life. Free time was not a problem, even though I was working for that family. I looked after the children, cleaned, and did laundry. I didn't do all these things alone—the wife in the family was a part of this, too. In a way I was like a big sister to the children. I took a shine to cooking early on...I've always loved to cook.

I had *really* wanted to go to Cal [University of California-Berkeley], but I knew it was out of the question from the standpoint of cost. So I planned to go to San Francisco State. The teacher who befriended me in high school graduated there. She was something of a heroine to me. I thought it was a pretty good idea, so I moved over to San Francisco and I applied for work at the telephone company. They wouldn't hire me until I turned 18, but I took the tests and everything.

I was still only making about \$30 a month working for a doctor's family, and I never felt any sense of closeness with them, so I kept looking for another job. I found one working for the Jantzen bathing suit company in San Francisco in the stockroom. I stayed there until I was 18, then I went to the telephone company and went to work for them.

Due to the influence of this very marvelous woman who was the teacher I mentioned, I thought I'd like to be a teacher. I thought I wanted to teach physical education, mainly. Back then you didn't have to have two majors—you could be just a physical education teacher. The other thing I had been active in was public speaking classes. That teacher urged me to go into law, which was sort of in the back of my head, but I knew it wasn't possible. I was going to be lucky if I made it to college.

I had planned to go to college, but then the war broke out in December of 1941, the year I graduated from high school, and that changed everything. There was never any question in

the minds of all of us at that time: everyone wanted to do their part in the war effort. The men were all being taken, and there were a lot of things where women were needed to do men's jobs. I could not see sitting at a switchboard when there were other women who could do that, so I went to work in what we now call the defense industry.

I had worked at the telephone company for a few months, until the war broke out. I spent the rest of the war working in defense plants. I worked for the navy for a while, out at Hunter's Point, and then back at the shipyards in Oakland. I did what we used to call bucking rivets—like Rosie the Riveter. We would buck rivets, and we ultimately did some warehousing at the shipyard. I was active and very strong. They had a lot of women doing the heavy lifting and the driving of trucks, so I did a lot of different things at that time. I was making good money and I enjoyed it! I was living by myself then in Oakland.

During this time, Norma stayed at home with my father and stepmother. Apparently, after I left, my father began to put two-and-two together, so Norma has often told me that she didn't have as much trouble. She thought that that was the reason for it. She stayed at home until she was about 16, I think. Norma was not one to just take off and go, but she did run away. When they took her back, she told them that she didn't want to stay there, so they placed her in a foster home in Alameda. She stayed there until she got out of high school and married. We were seeing each other quite a bit by then. As a matter of fact, when she turned 18, she too moved to San Francisco so we'd be closer together.

MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND EMPLOYMENT

After I finished working in the war industry when the war ended, I met John Bennett. I met him in Oakland through some mutual friends. He was my first serious male interest. John was born in Canada, but moved to Oakland when he was six years of age. His family was far more normal than mine. He had two sisters and two brothers. His mother and father were divorced, and the father raised the children in that family. That was really in the midst of the Depression, and trying to raise five kids.... I was very close to John's father, and still am close to his family. I had no "mother-in-law problem." [laughs] She'd have to be awful bad, because I love my brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law—they're all neat people. We used to have a great time.

John had been in the navy all during the war, but he was out of the service when I met him. He had been able to send some money home to help. He was working in Oakland and worked at a number of different things. He did some selling for a tire company for a while—it was *really* hard work.

John had been active in a union, and he had an uncle that was very active in the union at that time, so John has always had a special place in his heart for unions. I have, too, for that matter. I recognize that there is good and evil in them *today*, but I think it's important for people to understand that they would not be earning the wages, have the job and safety protections, or be living in the homes and driving the cars if unions had not brought about decent working conditions and wages. I think that the working men and women of this country had ought to always be grateful for that.

I didn't belong to a union when I was working in the war industry because I think they waived a lot of the requirements back then—they knew that it was temporary. As a matter of fact, most of the men that went into the service maintained their union dues. I don't know whether they paid them or whether they were just carried on the books or what. But of course when the war ended, there was no longer any place for women like

myself who had done a lot of the men's work. This was traumatic in a lot of ways, because a lot of women had come to depend on the money they had been earning to provide some independence in their life. Then they found that the jobs had to be turned back to the servicemen who were returning. We all understood that, but felt that there should be room for all of us, and there wasn't. Ultimately, that's one of the things that led me to be active in forming the Women's Political Caucus. It also fueled my being active in attempts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. I felt that women ought to be the masters of their own destiny—we should not have the government and business telling us that we cannot do those kinds of things because we're women, especially since we've proven we can do them.

After the war John and I married, and then I didn't work. When we were first married, we lived in Oakland. We started a family, and we ultimately had three children—two daughters and a son. I did go back to work in time. I guess I was a real pushy broad. [laughs]

I think that having grown up in poverty and during the Depression, there were a lot of things that I wanted in life. I didn't want to be working for someone else, and I had all of these ambitions. I wanted everything that life could offer. I'd worked for people that had the Cadillacs in the garages, and their swimming pools, and their beautiful homes...what we call the "American Dream." It was what I wanted, so I was willing to work. John was always very good in that respect, too. We worked to get there.

Because my childhood was so unnatural, I had special feelings about having a family and being a mother. I guess that I was perhaps too *easy* a parent I guess even my kids thought that I could've been a more firm parent. They got away with a lot of things that they felt they shouldn't have. I never physically punished

the children—*never*. I would not lay a hand on them, and I was very adamant about that. I just didn't think that was a way to bring them up. I really did enjoy the children, but there were things that were missing, too. Never having had this home life as a child, you're not sure what to do with children and how to take care of them. But when you live in a neighborhood, neighbors learn from one another. There was a woman next door who had three children at the time, and another across the street who had two older children. So there was someone that you could go to for advice and learn what you're supposed to be and do as a mother. I'm still very close to my children.

We weren't well off when we were first married. It was a matter of two people working hard to get the things that we wanted. I didn't go back to work until right after Linda was born. She's the youngest. I went to work for the government at that time. The job wasn't anything that I wanted to stay with, and John in the meanwhile had advanced. He went to work for the government and became an electronics equipment inspector. There was some advantage to working for the government in those days for servicemen, because they got to keep some of the seniority, and he advanced nicely. Ultimately John decided that he just didn't want to work for the government, so he quit—not just like that, though, because he had a family. We talked about it for some period of time. We decided it was time to make some changes, and we came to Reno. John had a brother in Reno who was in the plumbing business, and he had offered John a job as an expeditor. That's how we came to Reno. I wasn't employed, so I didn't leave behind a job, but I did seek employment when I got to Reno. That was in 1964. We bought a home on Keystone Avenue on the fourteen hundred block, as I recall. The kids were in high school at that time, so they went to Reno High.

I think we had been to Reno twice in the past. Most everyone in California comes up just to have some fun. We didn't really know anything about Reno, and the change was difficult for us. That was because our children had to change schools. If you take children out of school at that age, it's a *tough* move for them...it was traumatic. We both left our families, with the exception of John's brother, Tom, and his wife, who lived in Reno. So it was a difficult move. I didn't fall in love with Reno overnight for those reasons, but it didn't take me long to learn.

I liked Reno because it was a small-town atmosphere, and it was easy to get acquainted with others. It was easy for the kids to make friends, once they made up their minds that they would. I think that those were some of the bonuses of moving.

I went to work for the telephone company in Reno in 1964. In 1965 I had a heart attack, which resolved any lingering ambitions that I had as far as "ladder-climbing." You really stop and take a look and decide where you want to go, what you want to do, whether your values are as they should be.... I did a lot of that at that time.

We'd been through a lot of stress, and I'd always been a smoker, so I'm sure that that was a part of it. I had the heart attack at home. I'd gone into the hospital because our older daughter, Sherry, then was out of high school—she'd gone to work for Washoe Medical Center as an EEC technician. My knee popped up—really swelled—one day, and she said I should see a doctor. I just felt kind of icky and really lousy. But I'd gone on to work and then got to feeling worse and worse on this particular Thursday. So Sherry talked me into checking into the hospital. The doctors checked me out through Thursday and Friday, did EKGs, and couldn't find anything wrong. I've learned

since that time that an EKG doesn't show much of anything.

They released me on Saturday, and Sunday morning I had a myocardial infarction. I had a bad one, a very strong heart attack. I knew I was having a heart attack. The pain was oppressive, like a boulder on my chest. My arm felt like it had been clamped off—it was like someone was just pulling. I had walked down to the Eagle Thrifty store on Keystone and West Seventh to pick up the Sunday paper. Sherry showed up later because I hadn't come back. I guess when I didn't come back right away, she went down and found me. I just sat there, she ran back and got John and called the doctor. I described my symptoms to her and she relayed them very accurately to the doctor. He did not believe it was anything serious, ordered a pain medication sent to the house, and said I should come into the office in the morning.

At that time, I guess Reno was still so small that we didn't have a cardiologist—internists took care of those things. I've never gotten over this, because it made me more and more furious with the way women were treated. The doctor who had had me in the hospital prior to the heart attack said, "Oh, well."

When they released me from the hospital, they told me at that time, "Women your age do not have heart attacks." He told me that and I believed it! The next morning we went to the office and they hooked me up to the EKG. I could see it running off the machine, and whereas there are normally sharp points on an EKG pattern, this was sort of like low-sloping mountains with rolling lines on it—no sharp points. The nurse who was doing the testing on me shut the machine off immediately and went running for the doctor. And, of course, he sent me over to the hospital then in a wheelchair. I have to believe that he was wondering whether they

were going to get sued. I never thought of it at the time. I've never sued anyone in my life, but that was a very life-threatening situation and was an extremely poor decision that the doctor had made.

I spent about three weeks in the hospital; they didn't have the equipment or technology that they do today. It's surprising how much progress has been made in the last 22 or 23 years. But in 1965 they didn't even have really good monitoring machines in the hospitals. At any rate, I spent three weeks in the hospital and another three months recovering at home before they let me go back to work, which they don't do any longer. I think they feel you're better off moving around soon and trying to get back into your normal pattern.

The first time you have problems with a heart, I think that you change some of your style of living. I think that a heart attack has a distinct impact on the value system. It compels you to get into things that maybe you've been delaying because you thought you were too busy. You pay more attention to what's going on in the world and start getting involved.

Following the heart attack, I really didn't do a lot of anything, because I had a recovery period and we had three teenage kids. Then when the money got tight, I returned to work for the telephone company. I had gone to work for the telephone company before the heart attack in 1964. Then when I had the heart attack, I was on disability, some of which was paid. When that time ran out, my job was still there for me. I was a good employee. I was conscientious; things came easily to me; I learned quickly; and I showed up when I was supposed to. I think that they're more patient with good employees than they are otherwise—I think any company is.

I went to work at the phone company as an information operator. If someone called in and wanted a number, you looked it up. This

was before all of the new changes came in; it's now done by computer. I spent five years as an operator and then transferred over to what they call the traffic offices, where we worked budgets and schedules, and where the insurance and time records were kept. It was sort of a secretarial-bookkeeping-budget analysis job. It was interesting work and I enjoyed it. I also worked as an assistant traffic operating manager, which is quite a jump from other clerical work or from being an operator. I worked in that department as a substitute for some time. This was about 1970.

I was 40 years old when I went to the telephone company, and it was unusual for them to hire someone at that age. Promotions simply were not going to older women. By that time I'd been there five years, so I was 45. I found myself in a position of training much younger women who would be promoted. You hear of this often, even today. I took the FAR-Personnel Advanced Review tests, I believe it is—and scored extremely well. Still, I was seeing all these young kids getting promoted. It began to bother me a lot, because by then I was also involved in other women's issues, though the women's movement had not really impacted Reno as it had elsewhere in the country. I really was *very angry*.

The minority issue, which I still often think about, was also coming into play along with the problems with women's issues. The telephone company had developed a policy wherein they had to advance so many minorities, and they were good about it. Minorities included Hispanics, blacks, and Asians. But the one that really threw me was that it meant Basques. How it got to that, I don't know. In fact, I recently read an interesting story in *Time* magazine discussing how they're bringing all these different elements of society into the Affirmative Action programs with very little proof that they're minorities.

Between my age and the policy of promoting minorities at that time, I was really kind of locked in at the telephone company. The minority thing didn't bother me because as part of the Nevada Women's Political Caucus, we were working with those kinds of things. I was fully aware that people who have a lot of seniority and a lot of time in sometimes don't get promoted. The purpose for that policy, in my opinion, was to open doors that had been dosed to those people for all those years. And the doors *had* to open—that's all there was to it. They still do, for that matter.

I'd applied for a job in engineering, which would have been a substantial upgrade, and lost it to a young Hispanic woman, and I did not complain about it. However, the company policy of continuing to promote on the basis of youth was making me more irate all the time. I wasn't sure how far the laws went in prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age, but I felt that they went far enough where a clear pattern could be seen at the telephone company. I happened to be in a position where I could accumulate statistics—I knew when people came to work and I knew their ages, so it was simply a matter of putting numbers together. When I did, it was even worse than I thought it was.

When I still could not advance in the traffic department, I asked for a transfer into another department. At that time I was seriously considering leaving, but I wanted to get my 10 years in, because they had just passed a new federal law dealing with vested pensions after 10 years of service. I figured, "All right. I'm going to stay until I get my 10 years." However, it turned out—unbeknownst to me at the time—that the law only applies when you contribute to a pension system. At that time, the telephone company paid the entire amount of the pension. So I spent a

couple of years more there than I would have normally, and the promotional policies there on the basis of age were no better than they'd been in the traffic department.

I decided to resign, and I wrote a very scathing letter to the head of the telephone company in Nevada, pointing out my reasons for it and citing statistics. By then I had talked to an attorney who had spent some time here in Reno and had gone down to San Francisco to open an affirmative action-equal opportunity legal office. I contacted her and sent her the information. As a matter of fact, I sent her an exact copy of the letter that I'd sent to management. She felt that I had a case, but she was so bogged down that she couldn't take it. As a matter of fact, she could only recommend one attorney at the time that she felt even had enough background in it to take it on. But we were not in a position to hire an attorney.

So I wrote a letter to the phone company and told them that I had been advised that I probably had a very strong case, but could not afford to pursue it. I felt that they ought to look to their policies and do something about them, and they have over time. I can't say that that was the sole reason, but I do believe that it was certainly an impetus towards some changes that took place in the telephone company.

I didn't exactly get a direct response from the telephone company when I wrote the letter. The executive secretary to the head of the telephone company here in Nevada at that time also happened to be a personal friend of mine whom I knew outside the telephone company. Apparently, the boss found out about it and sent her to talk to me. Of course, I pulled no punches again. I said, "You have my reasons. They're valid." My letter was a letter of resignation, and I left on that note—that was in 1975.

BECOMING A POLITICAL ACTIVIST

My interest in politics started when I was in junior high school, because that was at the time when Franklin Roosevelt ran against Alf Landau. We conducted our own little campaigns and cast our “straw votes.” We campaigned and argued among ourselves, and made fun of the other person’s candidate, as kids are wont to do. I was always a Democrat. My father was one, too.

I remember one night John and I went to dinner with his brother, Tom, and his wife. I was interested in politics even then, around 1965. I guess Tom’s wife asked me if I knew who our senators were, I did know some, but not all of them. So I soon got their names and began to read local papers. I was not involved in politics in California—I was too busy with three children. [laughs] We had had all of them in a four-year period of time, so there wasn’t a lot of time for that sort of thing. But I did follow things. I knew who the mayors, congressmen, senators, and city council people were, so I followed the issues. I was not actively involved, but I was involved

emotionally and kept track of things that were going on.

I had always been anxious to study law, but my only opportunity was to take an extension course. From 1967 to 1971 I studied law through an extension course offered by La Salle Extension University out of Chicago. It was a widely accepted, good course, although home study is not the kind of thing that prepares you to be a lawyer in a court of law, in my opinion. You don’t get access to that kind of training. You’re strictly reading out of books and taking tests. But it provided a very substantial background in business and corporate law. As a matter of fact, I never thought that I would have an interest in corporate law, and so when my highest grades came out of that, I had to tell you I was pretty disappointed. [laughs] I hoped they would be in some other area of law, but knowledge of corporate law is advantageous in dealing with contracts and business. Later at city hall it was certainly an advantage in reading contracts

and dealing with ordinances, and it has been something that has been very useful in my life.

I became interested in many issues when Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968. I stopped into a small neighborhood grocery store, and the news of his death hadn't been on the air too long. I had stopped to get a package of gum on my way to work. When I went to pay for it, there was a customer in there talking to the man who owned the store. They were talking about the Martin Luther King assassination. They said, "It's about time somebody got that bastard." That did it! I knew if I opened my mouth that I was just going to be in *terrible* trouble. So I threw the gum down on the counter and left. That just *stuck* with me.

I contacted Eddie Scott, who ran the Race Relations Center at that time. I don't know where I learned about him, whether I had read something in the paper or what, but that's how I really began to get involved in things in Reno. I worked with Eddie on housing problems and in other things. Eddie is quite a character, but he was committed to the things he believed in. No one in the black community—like the women—had ever spoken out about their concerns and about what was happening to them in the community. Therefore, I enjoyed working with Eddie.

One of the major issues I worked on with the Race Relations Center was fair housing for blacks. That was a serious issue. I'd go out and apply for an apartment all by myself and the landlord would be willing to rent it to me. Then if a black member of the group were to go with me, he would be told there was no vacancy. Or if he went alone, there would be no vacancy. It's tragic that you have to stoop to some so-called underhanded tactics, but if you want to prove a point, at times it's necessary to do that—it really is.

The main problems that we were looking at as far as discrimination was concerned were those that dealt with the black population in the area. If I remember right, there was no black professor at the university at that time. There may have been *one*, but that would still have been disgraceful, and there were not a lot of black teachers in the schools.

Through the Race Relations Center I met other women who were involved: I met Maya Miller and Nancy Gomes. Those women were the two major impacts who were also working with Eddie. Through them we got in one thing after another. Maya had always been involved in this sort of thing and so had Nancy. I suppose you could say they sort of took me under their wing. When I realized how much I had been missing, how little I knew about these kinds of things, and how much I could learn from people like that, it really took a lot of my thought processes and kept me busy. Despite the fact that I was working, we went on to a lot of things. We started the Nevada Women's Political Caucus as a result.

Nancy ran for the school board, and I worked with that and began to get involved in some of the other campaigns, like for Mary Frazzini. I was also a member of the Business and Professional Women (BPW) at that time. That was how I met Mary Frazzini and Marge DeCosta, who later worked with me in founding the Women's Political Caucus along with Maya and Nancy. The BPW had access to names of other clubs throughout the state, so I got in and sent letters out to those people, letting them know that we were here. We were not successful in getting clubs outside of Reno or our immediate area, because I was working full-time. Just getting Reno going was a substantial challenge at that time.

I don't belong to the BFW now, and perhaps some of their aims have changed. They probably set out to be a social organization

to bring working and professional women together to learn from one another, but early on they also began to address some of the issues involving working women. I shall not forget one night when the BPW honored me as one of the women of the year. The speaker was Betty Stoddard, who now does ads for Carpeteria in Reno. Anyway, here she was in front of this group of informed, caring women, and she told them that a woman should never be president because during “that time of the month,” they were just too unpredictable. [laughs]

We really developed a tremendous initial northern Nevada Women’s Political Caucus. Mary Frazzini was a Republican, so it was a bipartisan kind of thing. We worked hard to keep it that, and we did have a substantial number. Sue Wagner, who is also a Republican, came in in time. Our main thrust at that time was to get some parity in elective offices in this state. Up until then, we’d never had a woman on the Reno City Council; never had one on the County Commission; never had one in Spark. And only about five percent of the legislature were female. Most of those women, I’m sorry to say, were the kinds of women who were uncomfortable with a women’s political movement—like Helen Hen. They fit into this male-dominated society because they didn’t rock any boats.

Our first major chore—outside of organizing, getting members, getting the word out in the community, doing newspaper pieces and stories on the radio when the opportunity presented itself—was we wanted to establish a City of Reno Commission on the Status of Women. Sam Dibitonto was mayor at that time. I went to Sam and he was only too happy to start it. He has two daughters and a wife. He said he was surrounded by women, and he would be happy to get us a

women’s political caucus. And we did. So we had the Reno Commission on the Status of Women going, which began to get into issues in Reno. Then there was also the Caucus, which attempted to encourage, find, and train women to run for office and work for the Equal Rights Amendment.

One of the other things that we dealt with at that time was our attempt to attract men who were of a like mind into the Women’s Political Caucus. We did have a fair number of those. I know that Dennis Myers was an early member, as was Ken Hailer. I think Jim Kosinski was an early member; there were some others, too. We also began to get into the university and attracted some university women. The university women at that time were talking about the fact that athletics for women certainly were not only under-funded, but they simply weren’t funded at all.

We really had our hands full with training people to work in political races. We trained people to do that so that they could get out and be active. From that effort came *hundreds* of women who worked for both men and women candidates.

At that time, there was an antagonism towards women’s groups of this kind, and Reno certainly was guilty of a bit of that. Here I’d been married for about 30 years at the time, and Sue was married, and Nancy was married. We also had women who were divorced, those that had never been married, and some that were too young to even be considering it. I felt it was very important to push aside this bra-burning image—it was so phony to begin with—but once that sort of thing hits the media, it just grows into a huge fireball. Unfortunately, I thought that, in a sense, we had to demean ourselves a bit in order to say, “Look, here’s a picture of me. I’m shopping in a grocery store, I’ve got kids, and I’m married.” I shouldn’t have to explain

those things, but it seemed very important to the future of the Caucus at that time. I was willing to do it and the members were willing to have it done.

The issue of lesbianism came up very early in the 1970s. I know I had a lot of people disagree with me, but I think this issue became a big problem. I went to the first women's political convention in Houston in 1977, I think. We had groups breaking any from the core of the National Women's Political Caucus, setting up lesbian caucuses, which was certainly their privilege. No one cared about their sexual orientation—which I didn't then and still don't—but I'm still convinced that it really slowed down the women's movement. In order to make progress we had to deal with it face on—not by telling them, "You can't do this,"—but by refusing to let them control either the national caucus or local ones. They were always welcome members and their concerns were addressed, but the majority of us felt that they should not be permitted to take over.

I've never been a member of the League of Women Voters. The intent of the League has never been to search out candidates, raise monies for them, or help them get elected. They were into other areas, presenting issues on both sides, and that was the difference between the Caucus and the League of Women Voters. The Caucus sought to take stands and tried to help the candidates who understood the problems that we were attempting to address. We also worked on legislation, changing Nevada laws that were discriminatory. The League never got into that. We had many things in common with the BPW and the League of Women Voters, as well as other organizations. But I think that at that time, our role was specific enough so that we attracted women not only from those

groups, but also others from outside those areas, too.

One Nevada law that was on the books back then was the fact that a woman could not go into business without her husband's signature. It didn't matter if she was the sole support of the family or if he was an invalid. It didn't matter what the circumstances were, which was so ridiculous. It was crazy—absolutely insane. When we first started fighting this law, we hadn't run into the Janine Hansens of the world. When she believed in something, she was—and probably still is—one of the most articulate, well-informed people you will ever run into. I have told her so. She and I agree on practically nothing, but I've always respected her, because she never showed up for a debate or to make a speech when she didn't have her facts.

Janine Hansen was active with the Eagle Forum. I think that that group, as well as other groups like it, had a contempt for women—and still do to this day. They saw us as an irreligious group because so many of their positions had developed as a result of their religious training and beliefs.

The decade between 1973 and 1982 seemed to produce women who were interested in social issues. For instance, by September of 1973, we were undoubtedly full steam ahead because there had been speculation about major office holders, and many men were being mentioned as potential candidates. The Caucus was upset because not a single woman was mentioned. So I wrote a letter to the editor, which was picked up in the Las Vegas paper as well as here, and *they* wrote editorials on it. I'm not sure they were too pleased that they had to admit that we were right—that women had simply been overlooked and

hadn't even been considered when it came to advanced offices on the state level.

The major goal of the Women's Political Caucus then became to get women to run for office. In the northern part of the state, at least, a lot of women candidates came out of that. There was Jean Ford, who was from the southern part of the state. Jean was active politically perhaps even before I was because she was president of the League of Women Voters. The northern part and the southern part of the state didn't have the ties at that time that we developed later on. There were a lot of women activists in the southern part of the state that didn't run for office, or who were not elected. Certainly, Jean served for a long time and was very active in a lot of these things.

Nancy Gomes was another woman who came from the Caucus. She served on the school board for two terms and then was elected to the legislature in 1977. I managed that campaign for her, because we had become very close friends.

Mary Frazzini also served in the legislature. She was elected before the Caucus came into being in 1973. She finished out one term, but was beaten the next time she ran. Through the BPW, Mary decided to put on a seminar on politics in government. I think it ran for eight weeks. They talked about running political campaigns—how to get involved and about contacting both state and national legislators. That one really had me fired up politically!

There was Mary Gojack, who served in the state assembly in 1973. From 1975 to 1977, she served in the state senate. She ran in 1980 against Paul Laxalt for his United States Senate seat, and was always a champion of the poor and women's issues. I'm sure it was obvious that she wasn't going to be a winner, but at the same time you have to start somewhere.

Mary also lost in the race in 1982 for the US House of Representatives seat against Barbara Vucanovich.

Eleanor Waugh ran for the state assembly in 1972. She was not elected, but she came out of the Caucus. She was a Republican, incidentally, but she was very strong on women's issues and also on a lot of social issues. I did not personally work on her campaign because I had my hands full with others. In 1976, Ellie ran for the assembly as an independent, and lost again.

Maya Miller was someone the Caucus supported. She demonstrated great convictions in taking on what was almost surely a losing race against Harry Reid for the Democratic nomination to the United States Senate in 1974. She took on the race because we were encouraging women to run, to speak out and be heard, and to make the issues that were important to us a part of the public record. Despite the fact that she was defeated, Maya has remained a strong advocate of women's rights. She has been a tremendous help to women, not just collectively or as groups, but as individuals. I can cite a number of cases where individuals who needed help or had problems were helped by Maya. She has always been a champion of the poor and minorities, too. I was her treasurer, and her campaign manager, Ken Bode, came out of Washington, D.C. He is now the political analyst for NBC National News. It's kind of interesting to note that.

It sounds rather foolish to say that the Caucus really worked hard to find qualified women, because certainly no one ever demanded that qualified men run for office. I think that the history of incompetent legislators and local officials bears that out. So while women were expected to be highly qualified for anything they wanted, it was not

also a demand upon men who chose to run for the same offices.

Obviously, the Caucus never supported anyone who did not understand women's issues and did not at least have empathy for them. But we supported men coming from the same positions who were knowledgeable about women's and social issues. So we were never simply a we're-going-to-throw-out-all-the-men-and-put-women-in-their-places kind of an organization.

Though many candidates supported by the Caucus lost, you have to start somewhere. You have to get your name out there, because the name recognition is absolutely essential. More than anything else, I believe, it has been women who forced discussion of issues that are important to women. We talked about health care, for instance. Those issues came to the floor because *women* wanted to discuss them, and *forced* discussions on them.

When Mary Gojack ran in 1982, she ran against Barbara Vucanovich for the U.S. House of Representatives. Barbara Vucanovich and her daughter, Patty Cafferata, have been very active. But when you encourage women to run for office, you can't encourage only those who agree with you. When we encourage women to run for office, we believe that they should stand on a record, if they have one, or on their position on issues. Even back then, single mothers trying to survive with children were a major issue and had our attention. Discrimination also caught a lot of our attention and time. The aims of the Caucus were really tremendous, but charges were levied against us by right-wing fringe people that we were out to break up the family. We still hear those charges today, which is absolutely asinine. It's the last thing in the world that a woman with a mind wants to do.

Abortion was not an issue right at that time. As a matter of fact, I don't remember

exactly when it became a much bigger issue—probably after the Supreme Court ruling, but I really don't remember.

One thing we were aware of was that the Reno City Council did not have a woman on any board or commission in 1975 that I'm aware of. On the other hand, men rampantly used these posts as stepping stones into politics: you serve on a board or commission; you learn about how government is functioning; you develop some name recognition; and you move on from there another step up the ladder. And when women are denied those kinds of roles in a community, it makes it very difficult for them to advance. It also makes it absolutely shocking when someone like myself is ultimately elected mayor.

The Equal Rights Amendment was introduced in the legislature in resolution form in 1973 and it didn't get anywhere. Then in 1975 I guess the assembly passed it but the senate rejected it. I still have a file of letters from people like Bill Raggio discussing our efforts on behalf of the Equal Rights Amendment, for which we testified, and the contacts we made with the legislators down there.

In 1977 we really went after it. We attempted to get some help from the Women's Political Caucus in California, which had enjoyed a certain degree of success in getting it ratified there. I went down there and developed a course for training women about the facts of ERA and the problems that we were facing—why we needed it, how to testify before the legislature, and a progression of things that we ought to be doing to be as effective as we possibly could. Our two groups worked together in developing this *spelled-out* program for all of the steps that we were going to take, how we were going to get women down to the legislature, get them to write letters, and get petitions going. It was

an educational process to really cover all of the issues that comprised what we believed to be the need for the Equal Rights Amendment. But it didn't pay off.

The opposition was extremely well organized and very well financed. The Mormon church was certainly one of the major movers—or at least members—behind it. I know that the Mormon church would object to it being said that they were behind it, but it was always our impression that they certainly played a very important role in the loss of the Equal Rights Amendment. I remember sitting in the legislature and seeing these Mormon women dragging their little kids up to the stand and screaming about sharing bathrooms. [laughs] I thought we had it made, and couldn't believe it when those kinds of arguments were the ones that cropped up nationwide.

At first a husband or father or brother would not want their mother or another female member of their family to be denied an opportunity to perform a job that they were perfectly capable of doing—one that would permit them to make a salary equal to or at least *somewhat equal* to those men were making at that time. And yet, when it came time, all of this went out the window and it was *emotion* that ruled from then on. It is a very difficult, if not impossible, thing to deal with. How do you argue with someone who says, "We're not going to have women using the same toilets as men," when they'd been using them on airplanes for 50 years. I just don't understand it.

That was only one of their arguments; then the religious arguments came into it. This is a religious country, and so when they convinced people that somehow the relationship between man, woman and family would be destructively altered because of the Equal Rights Amendment, that was it.

Of course, when abortion became an issue, we saw a lot of Catholic women coming in, too, who had very strong opinions. Many of them did agree with us on social issues, but they remain completely at odds with support for the abortion issue.

One of the things that was so frustrating and angering is that Janine Hansen at that time, for instance, ran for Congress. Janine Hansen was so busy with so many issues, she never had time to be at home with her family. She got a divorce. So here she was doing all of the things that she was saying that the Equal Rights Amendment was going to compel all other women to do... I have never believed in attacking on a personal level, and did not attack her that time on that level. Sometimes I wonder if we shouldn't have dealt with it, because we didn't play their game and they creamed us.

When we couldn't get the federal ERA passed, we decided to make an effort for a state ERA. But we couldn't even get it off the ground. The same people opposed it, and they were able to convince the same legislators to oppose it on all the same grounds. But there were many women—not Janine Hansens, but just ordinary women—who opposed the ERA. They were afraid to be taken down off this so-called pedestal and be forced out of the home to go to work. They believed that they would be forced to have their children cared for in a communist-type child care setting. All of those arguments were reaching ill-informed women, and they *did* have an impact, there's no question about it.

The ultra-conservative elements marshalled their forces and were very important in the defeat of the ERA. The other thing is that there was not enough money to really go after the ERA. Then there is also the political fact of life, whether it evolves around an issue of that sort or electing someone:

once you are put on the defensive, you may as well forget it. And we were on the defensive at the time. Despite our efforts, the ERA was rejected by the assembly, though it did pass the senate—just the opposite of what happened in 1975. Then in 1978, it was again defeated by a referendum vote in the state.

Though the ERA was defeated, Nevada women did gain some things in state legislation, like equality in credit rating and equal opportunity in jobs. I always had the feeling that that was sort of an apology on behalf of legislators. It was a “sop,” so to speak, because they refused to pass the ERA—they felt freer in being able to say, “Well, we don’t really need the ERA now, we’ve taken care of all the laws that were discriminatory, so now we’re fine.”

But there’s one major difference, though: when you do that on a state level, it’s always possible to change those laws that have passed. Any law of that significance, in my opinion, ought to be a national law. You shouldn’t be able to go from one state to the next and have your fights either abridged or denied because of some quirk.

The ERA is a dead issue now, because many of the laws that were so offensive to us have been changed as a result of our efforts to do something about it. If there appears on the horizon another one that we find extremely offensive, I feel that we have a good opportunity of getting it changed, because women understand that issue now. The majority of them—children or no children—are having to work outside of the home. Today women have advanced and have a better chance at equality than they did 15 or 20 years ago because of the individual legislation that has been passed. Attitudes have also changed.

An example of changing attitudes involves our oldest daughter. She went to work for the telephone company as an operator 18 years

ago. For about the past seven or eight years, maybe even longer, she has been in jobs that were previously exclusively male. She makes *very* good money. She’s one of only four in the state, and the only *woman* that does work involving special electronic switching systems. Sherry is an expert. She travels to all of these places, and makes fantastic money. Those doors would never have opened to her or other women just like her, and there’s a lot of instances like that, just at the telephone company—you see them all over town. Look at the women you see now in construction that never were there before. You see them in engineering, where they could go on to the university, get a degree and never get a job as an engineer anyplace because they couldn’t be hired. All of that has changed. Some marvelous things have come out of it.

Attitudes have changed because this is a changed world in which these young women are living. That “privilege” has been theirs from the day that they started school, because some of us cared enough to try to change things. Unfortunately, so many of them take it for granted. It’s sort of like labor unionism. They don’t understand that there were people out there on the lines working to change these things all through the years in order to permit them to do the things that they can do today. They think nothing of it, though, because it’s just their right. The right has always been there, but it was denied to a lot of people.

The Equal Rights Amendment won’t come up again because it’s just an emotional thing now that probably isn’t needed. I certainly don’t see it coming back in Nevada. I don’t even see the federal government taking it on again. As a matter of fact, I would be opposed to trying to do that at this point in time when there are so many other currently critical issues involving children having children. And we have the issue of the single working

mother trying to raise children. It's good to know, especially in retrospect, that you can lose a battle that's so important to you and still have the ultimate results of the issues raised during that time come out in a very favorable way.

In 1974, I think, the owner of the mobile home park in which we still live began to hit us with absolutely *atrocious* increases. We had bought a mobile home because we thought it was a place that we would retire that we could afford. The space rent was \$75 a month, and rental increases were jumping gigantically—\$35 at a crack. You'd get one and then six months later you'd get another one. It was simply an attitude of all the market would bear, because we had severe housing shortages and problems at that time.

With the help of Florence Gird, I founded the Northern Nevada Mobile Homeowners Association. We did a lot of lobbying, because the laws that were on the books were entirely slanted toward the benefit of landlords. You had very few rights. We enjoyed some degree of success in getting some laws changed down there, but we couldn't do anything about the outrageous increases that were forcing many of the elderly out of the mobile home parks all over the area. Many had bought retirement homes and found that their space costs increased. Some were walking away from it, because they simply could not afford them.

The really ironic situation was that so many people were being forced into subsidized housing because they had to leave the mobile home parks. A new Volunteers of America building was constructed, and I don't know how many elderly people from the mobile home park just left their homes and moved in there, because they said they could not tolerate the increases. And that was only a small piece of it. There were family parks

in town with a couple of children in them where the parents were hard pressed to buy a home and pay the initial rent even without all of these increases coming along. So we moved in the direction of rent justification... not rent control. We were saying, "All right. We understand that if your expenses are increasing, you have a right to increase our space rent accordingly. If your taxes increase, we expect an increase. But we do not expect to get these increases when your taxes have been lowered. You paid less than you did last year. Your costs of operating are not significantly higher than they were a year ago, and rent increases far exceed anything that you could possibly justify."

So that became a local issue which involved the mobile home people. There are thousands of us in this community. That led me to city council meetings—to attempt to get this rent justification ordinance passed. Ed Spoon was a member of the Reno City Council at that time. He said he would introduce the legislation for us, and he did. However, when it came time to be heard before the council, Ed Spoon said, "I introduced the legislation, but I'm going to vote against it"—which really, absolutely, was a political double cross. There's no other word for it. Therefore we didn't have a good chance to get it through, but we had made headway in pointing out the problems to the legislature. Sooner or later, we felt that we could convince the city council that it was a *real problem* in this community. And it was, there's no question about it.

We lost the battle, but we won in the sense that we changed a lot of laws that really benefitted mobile home people. For instance, we effected many roles, such as park owners have to give you notice of several months before they increase space rent, and if they sell the park and you have to move, they have to pay the expenses for doing some of this. A

lot of protections were built into the law that had never existed.

The gains that we made were at the state level in the legislature rather than the city. The greatest degree of success that we enjoyed with legislators was in proving to them that there was a very serious problem with mobile home tenants being ripped off in this state. There was a large group down in Las Vegas at that time which became pretty powerful, so we had legislators on both ends of the state listening to us. They recognized that the problem was statewide and that it wasn't just something that we dealt with here. They told mobile park tenants and owners that if these same kinds of conditions existed at the next session of the legislature, they would be willing to look very hard at some rent justification means.

As far as activism and my family life is concerned, I'm one of those fortunate women that has a husband who was never a chauvinist. The children's lives were not impacted in any negative way, and while they did not show any interest at that time in what I was doing, times have changed. They have moved into some areas now where they are involved and where they care about the issues. But back then they were taken up with far more important things than social issues—like the latest record that had come out. [laughs] Back in the 1960s, though, there were some teenagers who were interested in social issues. It seems like that was more common then than it is today. I think my children knew some of the things that were going on. They were upset over the Vietnam War, but not so upset that they would really become involved in doing anything about it. They weren't out on any lines picketing or doing anything of that sort. Their involvement has come much later in life.

My activism and concerns have had an influence, but all youngsters go in their own direction, you know. I'm sure that my concerns about social issues are really shared by everyone in the family, so that's a very worthwhile by-product of my involvements. At the same time, it was rare if I didn't manage to make it home to get dinner on the table.

COUNTY COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL CAMPAIGNS

I ran for the Washoe County Commission in 1975. I had talked it over with John, and by then the kids were pretty much on their own. I didn't have a specific goal, but I did want to be a city council or county commission member. I was interested in the county commission because of a lot of things that were happening, but I had not thought in terms of being the mayor at that point in time. While I was known for little bitty things, I really didn't have sufficient name recognition.

In 1974, about a year before I ran for County Commissioner, the Blue Ribbon Task Force Report came in. The task force was a project of the Regional Planning Commission and Area Council of Governments. It was intended to come up with a design for the future of the area. Many active, well-informed people served on the Task Force.

I suppose I'm one of the very few in the area who read the entire report—not once but many times. It was ten volumes. I had occasion to refer to them many times throughout the years. But the recommendations in there were so wise, so well thought out and researched.

The reports dealt with water, transportation, education, the quality of life, air quality...there were so many of them.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force Reports were certainly one of the main reasons that I ran for county commissioner, and I strongly advocated that their recommendations be seriously considered and become a part of law. But you're dealing with elected officials, and recommendations are one thing. I think it's criminal that all of that hard work and tremendous knowledge that went into the Blue Ribbon reports and recommendations were not followed. If these things had been put into practice, we would not have reached the state where we are today...we absolutely should *not* have, because we were warned.

As a matter of fact, there was a planner named Richard Eckert who wrote a very lengthy editorial in 1975. It said, "We are in an area where the population is going to exceed a quarter of a million; winter months will feature constant smog and carbon monoxide health hazards; most of the influx of persons will be low-paid gaming industry employees

unable to afford housing in the swanky new subdivisions. High-density apartments will spring up everywhere...

He also predicted that in order to finance police and fire protection, education, and other essential services, property taxes would soar. Obviously these things happened and tax payers rose up in arms, and we wound up with the legislature putting a cap on what we could do. He also predicted that the crime rate would rise, the demand for water would *triple*, and there would be chronic shortages. I made a note in the margin of the article that says, "How prophetic."

I've discussed this with other people who *really* care about the quality of life. At the same time I'm aware of how important it is for people to have jobs, because I've had to work my whole life.... It's not an unimportant matter. However, it has always been my argument that this community is fragile and it can only stand so much development. What is important is whether we are going to have that development in 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, or whether we are going to cram it all in at one time, where we suffer all of the problems that Richard Eckert described.

I went on to actually preach about water for years, because our water situation back in 1977 was absolutely critical. That was the drought year of 1977-1978, and the people of the community cooperated beautifully. We all put bricks in our toilets and shower restrictors in, and we saved water. We were very conscientious about it. What was so damaging and so destructive to the public attitude at that time was the fact that the politicians were giving away more and more of our resources that we simply could not afford.

Ironically, a separate water report came in at that time. The committee that wrote the report was comprised of some water experts, but more importantly of the really pro-growth

advocates who felt that nothing could stand in the way of development. They thought we had absolutely no problems with a water shortage, whereas many other people who knew the history of this area thought that we were heading for trouble. Yet all of the time we had been skimming along for many years, with Sierra Pacific having to acquire new water rights in order to serve new projects.

There are elected officials and those in the development community who believe that you absolutely have to have a three percent rate of growth in order to keep from being a dying city, which is *idiotic*. There are many cities across this country that don't grow at all or grow barely one percent a year that are very successful. So that just isn't true. But the real danger in that kind of thinking is that if you compound a three-and-a-half, four-and-a-half percent growth rate *every year* for 20 years, you don't have a three percent growth rate at the end of the road—you've got a significantly higher percentage of growth. But no one was ever willing to deal with planned growth in terms of not approving projects in excess of our ability to provide necessary resources. In my way of thinking, there lies the entire problem, even today.

Growth was one of my campaign issues when I ran for County Commission. Mine was not really an active campaign, because that was at the same time that Maya was running for the Senate. Her campaign took up a great deal of my time because the records had to be so precise, so honest, so accurate. We were not about to place women in a position where they could be criticized for being wrong, so that took a great deal of time and I was also working full-time.

I got my name out there, discussed things whenever the opportunity arose, but I never made any effort to raise funds, and I did very little in the way of printing. I had a

card printed up with my major positions on it, and I walked when I could. A few people walked with me, but it was not a hard-hitting campaign—the kind that you have to mount if you want to be elected. But this was my first attempt to get my name out there. As a matter of fact, it surprised the daylights out of me when I decided to run for office. But the women's issues led me into that. I had never considered running for office, never.

I have always been willing to do homework. To this day, I hate to lose an argument because I didn't do enough background checking on it. I lost a terrible debate one time because I didn't do enough homework, and I learned a good lesson from it. When you get into reading these things and you form your own opinions and conclusions, you don't want to just keep them to yourself if the issues are as important as they seem to be.

I spent a lot of time talking to women's groups, senior groups, mobile home tenants, and others. If I had an opportunity to talk about the kinds of things that affected their lives, then I wanted to do that. In the beginning I was a very nervous public speaker, but the Toastmistress Club helped a lot with that. Toastmistress teaches people how to relax and speak to the public. They are very effective, and it was a tremendous help to me. Ultimately I became a very accomplished public speaker. Always behind that was the fact that my homework was done thoroughly. If someone threw a question at me from the audience, I wasn't surprised or shocked, and I didn't say, "No comment"

I never got through the primary for the race for County Commissioner—nor did the man who defeated me win the general election. So that was that. But the important thing was that my name got out there—there had been some more people who had heard about me that never knew of me before. As it

happened, the media had found the tenants' battle to be very interesting and gave us a lot of coverage, which also put my name out front.

I don't think that there was anyone elected to the commission at that time with whom I agreed on the growth issue. Some people liked to talk about growth on the County Commission, just like some of them did on the Reno City Council. But it was what they considered to be growth, not the kind of terms that I was talking about—that we should be limiting growth in this community because of our resources. I also thought that we should be diversifying so that we wouldn't build a population of low-paid, low-income families and single individuals who couldn't afford to buy a home in this community.

After I was defeated for the commission post in 1974, I ran for City Council in 1977. Again, the growth issue was important to me. Most of the important things in the area of growth were taking place in the city of Reno at that time. This was during a time when we were getting into this huge boom situation—the time of the construction of the MGM hotel-casino.... There was definitely a pro-growth council, and almost everything was breezing right through. This was after some of the drought years, and some people really resented it. After all, Reno residents had put bricks in their toilets to save water, and then all of these casinos were approved by the City Council. The residents were well aware of this—more so than the elected representatives, who, unfortunately, have a tendency to only surround themselves and mix with those people who think as they do. But if you're not talking to the general public, you only hear that everything's OK from your friends and business associates. So it was very difficult for the elected officials to believe that not everyone was perfectly happy to have an MGM hotel in this city.

When I ran for City Council in 1977, there was a group of businessmen that had selected a slate of candidates. They endorsed Bruno Menicucci, who was running for reelection at that time. I don't remember some of the others except for Ed Oaks. There was a very pro-business endorsement, which you would expect to come from a pro-business group.

The contractors had a great deal to say, and they also had the money to pour into races, which is no small matter when it comes to being elected to office. Out of that group, the one that they endorsed in the large race that I ran in was Bill Wallace, who defeated me for the City Council seat.

During the 1977 race, the public was very upset about what was happening, but there was absolutely no organization—everyone was fragmented. Some individuals did speak out. I think Bill Eadington, a professor of economics at the university, always had to be careful about what he said on the growth issue, and probably still does. Ultimately, it was his opinion—it's not fact. I worked with Margaret Eadington a little on the growth issue. I certainly relied on Bill because he did a lot of the writing on gaming and growth. He wrote from a standpoint of economics, not just from an interest in growth. I was a fan of his and still am to this day, because I consider him a well-rounded, very sane asset to this community.

There was a lot of pressure and *heat* put on a number of professors at the university about this growth situation. As a matter of fact, there were even articles written in the paper about it. The business community said that they didn't like contributing to the university when some professors were speaking against what they thought were their growth interests. But what the professors were speaking about was some sanity of growth in this community. They were not speaking in opposition to business

interests. That resulted in putting kind of a "gag order" on these people, I assume, because most of them have been very quiet ever since then. Dick Sill was someone who spoke out very strongly about the air quality. He's dead now, but I can't imagine ever putting a gag order on Dick Sill. [laughs]

During the race I didn't get much up-front support from people in the university community. I'm sure there was a great deal of quiet support behind the scenes, though. Those who supported me knew where I stood on growth. The race, like all City Council races, was non-partisan. I always did everything I could to keep it that way, too. I never let party politics get into the City Council.

We worked harder on the City Council race than we had on the commission race. We did more door-to-dooring because by that time I had retired and had more time. We still didn't raise very much money. I've always strenuously objected to the cost of campaigning. Of course, it has become vulgar since that time. I felt one should run a campaign on as little money as possible, using volunteers, and I always did that—always. I think I only collected about \$1,400 in the 1977 race because I never solicited money a lot. Nancy Gomes wrote a letter on my behalf to supporters of hers. We wrote a letter, of course, seeking the support of the members of the Women's Political Caucus, and there were people who came through with small amounts of money—but not the \$500 contributions that the important people attract. These were small, person-to-person donations, and it was enough to get the job done.

People were *just* beginning to pay attention to the issues, and the paper was beginning to quote me in a few places here and there. Then, in September, 1977, I was asked by the Nevada State League of Cities to be a speaker up at its

meeting in Ely. All of the council members and mayors from all over the state attended this event. At that time, housing was a crucial issue because the MGM Grand was being completed and thousands of people were moving to Reno to work there. Plus Harrah's had expanded and they put in other new hotel-casinos. They were all labor-intensive industries, and if you have labor-intensive industries you have to have housing. As it was, there was already a terrible housing crunch in the area.

Anyway, housing, obviously, was a major problem during that time, and I addressed that issue when I was at the League of Cities meeting in Ely. I said, "Even the most die-hard, unlimited growth advocates will eventually realize that we've created a monster. Washoe County could be faced with serious multimillion-dollar school bond issues, and more real estate inflation if something isn't done to control growth. We might even have to consider a year-round school to handle all the kids." We're *still* living with new multimillion-dollar bond issues for almost everything we want to do, as well as rising real estate costs.

Those costs at the time were among the absolute highest in the country. Keep that in the context of a community which has always had 50 percent of the jobs being service-oriented. I think that the percentage of service jobs in this community now has reached 70 percent. I said at that time and have continued to say for many years that developers should be required to provide not only environmental impact statements, but should also be required to deal with the effects that a project will have in other areas, such as population, economic impact, transportation, and resources. The public mood was one of frustration, because after people had worked together to save water, the

city council put all the water that had been saved into development efforts. They didn't even have the good judgment to wait for a year or so. [laughs]

Here today we find ourselves going through the same kind of situation, and fortunately some council members have said that whatever water has been conserved will be reserved for use in this community, and will not be allocated for new growth. I hope they do, because if we don't, we're in terrible trouble. And people haven't forgotten those days. Since then, thousands and thousands of new people have come to this community, attracted by the jobs, however low-paying they may be.

No one likes to say, "I told you so," but I think it's important for history to reveal that none of what we're experiencing now should come as a surprise to anyone. There were enough of us—starting with the Blue Ribbon Task Force—who worked their tails off on that. There are many people like myself who have felt very strongly that we should monitor and limit—not completely *prevent*—area growth, because of the problems attendant with the growth-related experience.

Bill Wallace ultimately won the 1977 race for city council. There were 12 candidates in the primary—that was a very loaded field. It was for the at-large seat for the city council. Joe Latimore, who had been a city manager, and Bill were the two top vote-getters in the primary, and Bill went on to win. I don't remember what other seat was up for election. There had to have been at least one other seat up at that time.

There were some interesting things that happened after my loss in the primary, because I had essentially been speaking to the issues of growth, which were really more and more on the mind of the public at that time.

When the new council was seated at the end of June, there were three councilmen: Ed Spoon, Ed Oaks, and Bill Wallace. Ed Spoon had said at that time that all major developments should be halted until the housing shortage had been resolved. That's because there was an article in the paper dealing with housing. However, Ed Spoon ended up voting against very few developments. This was always a problem that I had with people when they ran for office: making promises to the public and either not caring, or conveniently forgetting them once they had arrived.

Wallace had said that he was very reluctant to approve any more large commercial developments, and in fact he didn't support everything that came along. I had no problem with Bill's integrity. He changed his mind on some occasions, and I believe that *he* saw it as being for very good reasons. However, it didn't help. After all, he told the public he wasn't going to approve any more large commercial developments.

I did not endorse Bill Wallace when he ran the second time in 1979, although he was not a bad man. He was very angry because I endorsed someone else in the race, but there was absolutely nothing personal in it. I endorsed someone whose thoughts and concerns about growth in this community were far more compatible with mine than were those of Bill Wallace. Bill was not 100 percent in favor of all of these things that were still going on after he was elected. He was occasionally a voice of reason, but that was not often enough.

When I lost the race for City Council, I think I learned some things. For one thing, you learn from each and every campaign. You become more professional in how you go about it, how to write a better press release,

and how to get publicity that's free, among other things. You have to learn these things if you're running. In other words, you learn a lot more about organizing a campaign. You also learn about the pitfalls of a campaign. You learn that there's always someone out there who wants to make you over into what they perceive to be the public image of an acceptable candidate or elected official. For instance, people in the community who have seen you for years know what you look like. I'll begin dressing like Liz Taylor and running around with a lot of makeup, in the first place I'd bankrupt myself, in the second place I'd be changing myself when in fact I have no desire to change. I am what I am and I want people to know that if I'm elected, this is what they're getting. But I did have people in my campaign suggest just that.

A few years ago Barbara Vucanovich rinsed her hair a gray-blue, and people began to talk about her blue hair. I'm sure that someone told her it was time for her to let her hair change, but she decided to get back to brown and not let it change to gray. [laughs] I'm sure this came as a result of the people who managed her campaigns, saying they wanted her to appear as young as possible to the voting audience out there. That's only a part of the image. A woman must not be too harsh in the way she debates, argues, or speaks, which can create problems for a Barbara Bennett.

When I'm committed to things, I can be very fierce. That's something that has to be guarded against. You have to be effective, make your points strongly with a guard against being offensive. It's a very tight line for someone like me to walk. There are times when I would just really love to have spoken my mind to some elements of this community.... I have gone farther than that,

even, a couple of times. It's a hard line. I have been very harsh in my criticism of special interest groups, whether it be developers or whoever, whenever a group's self-interest has taken far greater precedence over the interest of this community.

SERVICE AS RENO'S MAYOR, 1979-1981

I decided to run for mayor of Reno. The primary for the 1979 mayoral election was in May, and the general election was held in June, so I really started running in late 1978, getting my campaign organized. Raising money was a problem, because I knew that whoever ran as the darling of the business community would raise whatever money was necessary. I had the same group of people working with me as before, but we had added a lot more people by then, too—a lot of seniors and a lot of teachers. We also had the support of a lot of working mothers, because all of these issues were being discussed all the time.

I started walking early, and I really had an opportunity to talk with people. Therefore, we were just picking up new names all the time—people that believed in what we were saying and were willing to help, either with small contributions or telephone work. Or sometimes the people would walk in their neighborhoods or put on a coffee. It was really a person-to-person campaign. Some university students were also active. Mostly the support was behind-the-scenes.

My campaign manager was Mark Handelsman. He was an attorney in town, and he is now an elected judge in the Reno Municipal Court. Mark had worked with me in the mobile home tenants' group. He gave us a lot of free legal help, so we came to know each other very well. I have a lot of respect for him, because he's a very honest man and just a neat guy. I love him...he reads, he's nice, he has a good heart, and he's honest. Mark was a big help in the campaign because he had done some advertising work in addition to his legal work. We could only afford one radio spot, even when I ran for mayor. We worked hard and really organized our effort. We sent fund-raising letters.

Another person who helped was Don Richter, who was an insurance man in town. There were quite a few other business supporters who were behind the scenes, because what was happening was beginning to hurt them. There had been a lot of what they felt was favoritism in how contracts were issued, and in how insurance was purchased for school groups or city or

county government. There was a lot of dissatisfaction, and people expressed it at the polls. Contributions to my campaign came individually. I personally screened every check that came in, and had to return some, because I would accept only *personal* contributions, not business contributions.

Suppose an insurance man sends you \$50 or \$100 or whatever. He has a reason for that. Maybe he plans to apply to sell some insurance that the city is going to buy, although I don't think there was a lot of that going on. Or maybe it's an architect who has ties to a construction firm and to other developers. I'm not saying they all do, but I'm saying that it's a risk that you can't take. Either you're serious about taking only individual contributions or you're not. I *was* serious about it.

During the primary campaign for mayor in 1979, Ed Spoon, Bill Granata, and Bruno Menicucci were all sitting members of the city council. Eddie Scott was still active essentially in the black community in town. Bonnie Wilson was active in a number of things in the community, but I don't remember what they were. Bonnie's position on growth, I think, was not as firm nor as restrictive as I would have liked, but nevertheless, she was a strong planned-growth advocate. She ran very well in the race, incidentally, and in fact, she beat Ed Spoon. Bruno Menicucci and I came out on top.

Obviously, we watched the primary election evening with a great deal of interest. At about the last hour before the absolute final returns were in, Bill Granata had been leading me by a small margin. But I had really learned how to calculate votes and percentages when I had managed some political campaigns, and I thought I would beat Bill Granata. The reason for that was at that time the returns from the Stead area were usually the last

ones to come in. I had worked that area well and knew a lot of people, and I was certain I would run well out there. Though some people believe you should try to strengthen your weak areas, I had always believed in enforcing your strengths, and that is what I did. At any rate, when the final results came in, I think I had won by 230 votes, which was close, considering there had been a large turnout. I think there was a 65 percent turnout or something which is *very* unusual for a city primary. I really attribute that to the fact that people were terribly frustrated over the problems that growth was creating in *their* lives.

Bill Granata's term was up, but Ed Spoon and Bruno were still mid-term in their city council posts, which can create some very uncomfortable situations. Bill Granata didn't come out publicly and endorse me after his primary defeat, but I think that he was instrumental in behind-the-scenes help for me in the general election. He had his own reasons that he never really chose to discuss with me, but I always considered him a factor in that. Also, I think it was clear to most everyone that I had some behind-the-scenes support from business. That was because the longevity of businesses was also being threatened by the growth situation. After all, someone's got to pay for it. New growth never even begins to pay for itself until it's been in place for about 18 months.

During the campaign for the general election I was opposed to the collateral sewer plan. It had to do with a consortium of business development interests wanting to pay \$5 million to add some capacity to the sewer plant. Bill Wallace and I felt that it was giving an unfair advantage to them, and that it would be very unfair to the development of the community at large. I remember that sewer

fees were substantially increased. Obviously, the necessary additions to the sewer plant came as an immediate result of area growth. People who had lived here and paid for sewer hookups and fees all through the years felt that new people coming in should pay for these things.

I was able to walk and cover a lot of Reno, although even then you couldn't hit every house in town because the city was so large. We always had a telephone number where if someone had a question and wanted to call, they could do so. The impression that I had in talking with people was really one of *substantial* support for the positions that I had been speaking out on.

I think that people were surprised that I did as well as I did in the south end of town, but people at that time had \$100,000 or \$200,000 homes there, and they almost had more to lose than someone else if something wasn't done with the growth problems. Here we are today with the people that moved to the south end of town, because they wanted some open space around them; now they find that this growth is encroaching and the very quality of life and the reasons for which they moved out there to begin with are threatened. So I think that there was far more support in the south end of town from those people than anyone anticipated.

Obviously, I had my other supporters. I had a lot of support from the seniors, because I had been involved on a voluntary basis with them in a number of areas. There were also women's groups working for me. There were people from the university working for me, too. But there were also those who were hostile. I had the door slammed in my face. You always will have that from some people, but not as often as you might expect. For the most part, if people disagreed with you, they would say, "Well, I don't agree with you, but

more power to you or some foolish remark. But most people are not vicious. A few are, but not very many. Besides, you're not going to go to the front door of one of your opponents. You do avoid some animosity that way.

During the campaign, the FBI was investigating the insurance business of my opponent, Bruno Menicucci, and I think he blamed his defeat on that. I don't doubt that the FBI investigation hurt him some. Eventually it was dropped. I think it was very unfortunate, because it hung like a cloud over his head, and I really didn't like it. We've seen it happen both in the state and across the country. I think that they should either have charged Bruno with something or dropped it early enough so that it didn't hang over his head. I do believe if that investigation *had not* been held, I still would have beaten Bruno because of the votes he'd made on growth and the position that I had taken.

Bruno never claimed to be a pro-growth person. He said he was a moderate-growth person, but actions speak louder than words. Bruno's history clearly indicated that he was very pro-growth, and the public was more responsive to where I was on growth than where Bruno's was.

I didn't get any support from the gaming community although I was offered a contribution by the Nevada Club. Lincoln Fitzgerald was the owner; he's dead now. A woman who worked for Mr. Fitzgerald called me and asked me to come in because he wanted to talk to me. That was the only contact that could be made with him. He was very elderly and he had some policies concerning his employees that I rather liked. I had heard a lot of good things about him. If you worked for Fitz and you needed help and were a good employee, you could get help. I respected him for those things.

I set up an appointment to go in and see him, and he offered me \$1,000, for which I thanked him, but I refused. He didn't ask for anything—he never asked for a thing. He didn't say he was going to support me, but I think that he thought I was going to win. [laughs] I think he had seen enough elections around, and he really believed I was going to win. But I told him I was taking no special interest money. I had no other contacts with the gaming community at that time. Some of them took shots at me; some of them left me alone.

Whenever I went for interviews at the newspaper, I was asked, of course, about my attitude about gaming. I didn't say that we should never, ever have additional gaming growth, but I said that in my opinion, it was not in the best interests of the gaming community to have additional growth. Warren Lerude, of the *Gazette-Journal*, pushed very hard on that. I don't know whether he thought he could get me to change my mind or what, but I just held firm to my position. He kept asking the questions over and over again on my attitude about gaming. I didn't have any problem with gaming per se in the community, and they did pay a lot of taxes in the city. I just did not feel that we should be a city with all our eggs in one basket, and I felt that we *could not* continue to experience all of this outrageous growth in hotel-casinos. We should also be able to bring in some diversified industries.

I think Mr. Lerude had already assumed that I was anti-gaming, which, of course, was a wrong assumption, because Reno has thousands of people working in the industry. After all, I had always been a working person and certainly *cared* about working people. But, at any rate, he wrote in an editorial that he felt that my attitude toward gaming was not healthy. The paper endorsed Bruno, but I won.

Actually, about two weeks before election day, I knew that I was going to win the race. I

had become very good at figuring percentages in the election—how much so we were going to win or lose by—and it's a system that's worked for me on many occasions. I knew then that I was going to win, and I went about business as usual. I made sure I never got cocky, and continued to say the same things that I had been saying since 1976, so there was nothing new. I was locked into the positions I took.

On May 31, 1979, which was just a week before the general election, John had a heart attack. We were at a fund-raising event—a bean and hot dog fund-raiser out on the river. John became ill and didn't say anything to anyone for a while. Then when I didn't see him, I went looking for him, and when I found him he was really looking awful. I thought, "Well, I better take him home," but as we started to leave, he collapsed. I knew he was in big trouble. Fortunately, we were walking by some apartments on the river to get to the car, and there was a man out in his backyard. He saw John collapse, and went immediately and called the paramedics. John's heart attack was a severe one. It was his first heart attack, and he might not have made it if that man hadn't called immediately. The paramedics responded very fast—*very* fast. John was in the hospital when we were finishing up the race, so we pulled in our horns a little bit that week. He had to have a pacer inserted and a lot of things done. Anyway, it kind of threw us for a loop, but he did well while he was in the hospital.

I've been asked if that drew some public sympathy for me in the race. I think that there may have been some of that, but I think it also might have been offset by another attitude, which was, "Well, this woman's husband has a bad heart, and she ought to be home taking care of him—not sitting at city hall."

So I think some people were probably kind of upset at me, and I was very upset myself. But once John was past the danger point, it wasn't so bad. We had our work done and we had some walkers out at that time, and a few last-minute things to be done. The doctors put my mind at ease—they said John was going to recover, and that then they would find out what needed to be done. John also urged me to go on with the election. He's always been such a strong supporter, and he didn't want me to stop. That made it much easier.

One of the things that was of interest by that time was Joe Conforte [Conforte was the owner of the Mustang Ranch brothel—[Ed.] Anyone in politics knew that Joe always had the most accurate polls around. A week or so before the general election, he had made me a three to two favorite, and it turned out he was right on the button, too. I don't know why he did the polls—maybe he was betting, or maybe he just wanted to know. There were a lot of people who were benefactors of Joe's largesse through the years. Maybe he had somebody in there that he was interested in. I don't know. But he wasn't a fool when it came to betting, and his money was on me three to two.

The night of the election, my sister came up. She and I are very close. She didn't tell me until later, but the reason she had wanted to be here was because she was so sure I was going to lose and would need to be consoled. [laughs] I told her, "Don't worry about it. I'm going to win."

She said, "How do you know that?"

I said, "I just know."

Bill Lewis from the newspaper had made arrangements to be with me all that night, and I'm sure someone was assigned to cover Bruno, too. He was surprised that I thought I was going to win, too. It was a lovely evening.

As soon as we got the final results, Norma, my kids and I went on over to the hospital

to see John so we could share the good news with him. When we went in to see John in his room, he was so tickled when we came in. Here he was, having just had a heart attack, and he was kicking his legs up into the air, he was just so delighted.

The press had been following us around—even followed us up to John's room. They kept asking me if I wasn't going to declare myself a winner. I really wasn't in a hurry, and I certainly didn't want to make any dumb mistakes at that point in time. So I said, "No, I'd like to wait for a few more results to come in? But, as I said, I knew that I had won. I felt I would win by a substantial margin, but I did not think I would win three to two. I don't know if they were able to locate Bruno—my recollection is that they weren't. I had heard that he was up in the executive area of the MGM Grand, but I don't know. The paper was unable to reach him that night.

Bruno's loss was not only a shock to him, but also to the councilmen who were defeated. In fact, two incumbent councilmen were defeated. It was one of the throw-the-rascals-out kinds of times. It was a shock to all of them. Joe McClelland beat Clyde Biglieri, and Janice Pine beat Marcel Durant. Clyde had that run-in with the grand jury hanging over his head. Years later he was cleared of all that, but a lot of information was printed that never should have come out of the grand jury. He won an award some years later, but I think that it really hurt him at the time.

Joe McClelland talked about the need to do something about growth when he was running for office. But unless you say *what's* to be done about growth, this leaves a big, broad area. I have always hoped that voters would pay closer attention to what people say and question them, particularly when they make an open-ended statement that really has no meaning. He was jumping on

the growth bandwagon, but he didn't want to lose his source of money from the business community by saying that he didn't support slow growth. At the same time he didn't want to lose the voters who did want slow growth, so he was sitting on the fence, so to speak.

A rather happy note is that Joe was very good on the social issues. He supported CPPAB recommendations—that was the Civilian Policy Planning Advisory Board. He supported child support for the child care center that came up; he supported the appointment of minorities to positions on the boards and commissions. The only problem that I had with Joe was growth. Actually, I did have other problems with Joe, but they were not political.

In that election of June 1979, the voters also passed the Rancho San Rafael bond issue, and they repealed the 3.5 percent tax on food—that was Mary Gojack's bill.

When I became mayor, the first problem that I had, obviously, was to establish the fact that I was the mayor at the council table and not Bruno. I had to let them know that I was not Pat Hardy Lewis, and I was not going to be pushed around. This had to be done in some rather obvious ways and in some other more subtle ways. But I was able to establish that, despite the fact that they still didn't like it.

Pat Hardy Lewis had been on the city council before I became mayor. She was a very bright lady. She had seen the need for some direction and policy changes where growth was concerned in this community, and said so, but she was consistently voted down at the council table. She was serving with six men on the council, and they really gave her a hard time.

Pat's city council term was 1973 to 1977, when she was defeated. That really was too bad. She was the only person on the council speaking with a reasonably wise voice about

the growth problems that were already rearing their head in the community. One of the men that served on the council with her at that time was Nick Laud, who said something like, "Well, we're doing all right the way we are. We don't need any growth control measures; we don't need any better zoning ordinances; we don't need anything, just leave us alone." Of course, they did, and we all saw what happened.

When Janice Pine and I were due to move to the council table, I figured that maybe some of the men thought once again that they were going to quickly put us in our place. It didn't happen. I had chaired a great many meetings and knew what I wanted to do. I didn't have any doubts about my ability to perform in the job, even though there's no school that teaches you how to be a mayor. Believe me, it's an on-the-job experience.

Surprisingly, I was not nervous in the beginning. I was very confident, but not cocky. I knew things were going to come up that I didn't know how to handle. But at that point in time I relied on Henry Etchemendy, who was the city manager. He had gone over the agenda and told us how the council had handled things in the past, so that I knew where I was going. The city manager always sits next to the mayor, because they are ones that have been out doing all this background work, and you need to have him close by to talk to him.

Henry was a great help in my getting through the first session's agenda, which as I recall that particular day, did not have any controversial items. I think it was because there was a swearing-in process and they didn't want to kill us new members—Janice and me—right the first day. [laughs] Janice Pine is no longer on the council. She certainly wasn't as tough as I've been, and you can't really fault her for that. Janice and Bill Wallace

were honest people. I'm not saying that the others weren't, because I think the differences were largely philosophical. But the problem that I had with Janice Pine was that she was turned around by the big boys in town. I don't know whether it was just that the pressures that were brought to bear on her did it, or whether they were able to change her mind. I never did know, but it was a problem for me, because Janice would one time vote one way, and then another time differently. It was my opinion that someone got to her and somehow managed to change her opinion.

Janice was from the Crumley family. The Crumleys and Pines were two of the most powerful families in the state. Janice's father-in-law, Newton Crumley, had a great many interests in the community, and still does. Her mother-in-law served on the board of directors at Harrah's and Sierra Pacific Power Company. I guess she might have bent to family pressures or pressure from others. At any rate, she never offered the help that I had really expected from her. I had hoped that she would be a strong supporter on the council for the kinds of things that I wanted to get done, and she was not.

During my first two years as mayor, I had no big allies. There was no one. [laughs] Boy, that was a rough two years, because I still had Bruno and Ed Spoon on the council with me, and they had never wanted me there to begin with. There were bound to be hard feelings, so it was *very tough* trying to get anything done.

I relied a great deal on the press to get information to the public, such as public hearings. The people were my lifeline in the community at that time. Fortunately, they were serious enough about what was happening to show up at these hearings and let their feelings be known, because the development interests were out in force at

every single community meeting we had. They spoke out in the city daily about what they felt should be accomplished as opposed to what the people felt should be restricted.

The first meeting I had after the election was with the Certified Public Accountants group in town. We met down at the Sands, and I was the speaker that night. This was *very* shortly after I'd been elected—maybe only a week or two later. Many of them told me after the talk that they hadn't thought I had known enough to be mayor. When we talked about the issues that night, a couple of things came out: they said I could think fast on my feet because I knew the background, and that I was an effective speaker. That gives your ego a bit of a boost, so the next time you're not so afraid of facing this same kind of group of intelligent, fairly well-informed people.

Because the office of mayor is so public, I attended literally hundreds of luncheons, dinners, and meetings, and I was active in a lot of commissions. I was getting a pretty good press, not because I think they were bending over one way or another, but because they were honestly reporting what I had said. There was a certain amount of resentment among some of the council members because of that, but when I had my lumps coming, they gave it to me, too.

I never had a problem with the press. I felt that we had *better* have a press that prints things whether we like them or not. If they don't tell us, who's going to tell us? I'm thoroughly opposed to any kind of censorship, and I think a free press is vital to any hopes we have of retaining some of the democratic principles on which this country is supposed to operate—it doesn't always, but it's supposed to.

I was challenged at times later on in some subtle ways and not so subtle ways,

and I do have at times a very short fuse. I remember one instance when Bill Wallace said something that *really* made me angry—I don't remember what it was. I just jumped up on my chair. I think from then on there never was really a doubt at that table that I was going to defend myself and not be pushed around by any interests—either those sitting at the table or outside the council.

When everyone on the council was appointed to serve on certain boards and commissions, I appointed myself to the Regional Transportation Board. That was because there was a critical need for improving our public transportation system. I served on that during my entire time at city hall, and that was the period of growth. I do not personally take any credit for that. Jerry Hall headed up the Regional Transportation Commission, and still does. He was very good at what he did—a very forceful guy. He is now the executive director of Citifare. Sometimes he's too pushy... Jerry likes to be able to control everything. As a result of that, recently he's had a bout with Elderport, and he's been forced to make some changes which I don't really approve of.

Jerry was a great planner, and he saw the need for efficient public transportation. The Regional Transportation Commission was supportive of him, and government bucks were still available in the early days, which was a great help. If we were to try to get that kind of system on line today, I don't think we could do it, because the government dollars are just not that available. They had a budget then that was designed to at least carry them through that year and maybe into the next year. Therefore, the monies didn't diminish that quickly in the beginning. Ultimately, though, they did, because he wanted them stopped. But you don't stop government budget processes overnight, so we continued to get some substantial

funding, which was absolutely necessary. At that time, as I recall, a new bus cost \$40,000. I would venture a guess that today that same bus is probably costing \$65,000.

I am satisfied with our bus system, and I think that generally speaking, we have one of the better public transportation systems going. The credit is largely due to Jerry Hall's efforts.

When I was elected in 1979, I was the first publicly-elected mayor in Reno since the early 1960s, and the first woman to ever be elected in the city of Reno. There was a story about it in *Newsweek*. Back in the 1960s, Bud Baker was a popularly elected mayor, but then the process changed so that we had a council-manager form of government. But in 1979, the process changed once again so that the mayor would be elected. I was the first mayor under that new system to be elected. Now we have a manager-council form of government, and the law prohibits councilmen from interfering in the responsibilities of a city manager. The city manager, under the city charter, runs the city. The city council members are prohibited from interfering in that management, which is certainly wrong. The city manager is not accountable to anyone; he is appointed by the council. They say it keeps politics out of it, but that's asinine, because there's always going to be a majority on the council who are of one opinion or another. That majority is going to rule at the council table. They're going to decide who sits at the Reno Planning Commission, which is critical. They're going to decide who is city manager; they're going to decide the ordinances; they're going to decide zoning laws; they're going to decide everything. Of course, we have had a pro-growth council for *all* of those years.

Nobody that has a majority vote is going to pick a city manager who advocates slow growth or planned growth—that's not their

bag. The city manager has to do what the city council votes for, in a sense. But at the same time, the council is almost solely dependent upon this manager to provide them with information about city departments. When the council wants to get something done, they have to say to the city manager, "Get us this information." And that person is in a position to provide that information in any way he sees fit.

One of the issues that Ed Spoon had raised in the primary was Hank Etchemendy, the city manager. He felt Hank should go, because he wasn't offering any leadership. Of course, in my opinion, it's not up to the city manager to offer the leadership. That should be coming from the council and the mayor. It was either that, or perhaps he felt that Henry was too timid in his dealings with the council members. I don't really know... I don't recall that Ed ever told me what his specific reasons were for wanting to get rid of Etchemendy, other than he felt that he really wasn't a strong guiding hand in there.

Before the election I had been asked about it, and I said that I wasn't in a position to make a judgment until I had been there and knew what was going on. Ed did bring it up, but it was not pursued immediately, because I don't think that the votes were there. I think that Janice and Bill, along with myself, certainly wanted to know a little more. I don't know what Joe McClelland's position was, but I think that he also wanted to know a little bit more about the situation before we took any further steps.

Ultimately I did have a problem with Henry. It dealt with the fact that I wanted some information that I hadn't received at city hall. We still had a Regional Planning Commission at that time, and I went over there to talk with someone and get the information that I wanted. Apparently, the

person I talked to got back to Etchemendy, and Etchemendy raised hell with the guy for giving me the information. When I found that out, I went to Hank and told him that I didn't want anyone being told that I could not be provided with information that I requested.

I didn't have any staff that could get me information when I needed it. I always did it myself, which was one of the reasons why I advocated very early on for more money for the mayor. In the first place, it was *literally* a 12-hour-a-day job, and your weekends were never your own, because you were expected to be at a banquet or an opening or a ribbon cutting or someplace else. It was a tremendously time-consuming job, if you took it seriously and did the work, keeping in touch with the public. I went on having neighborhood meetings in people's homes to feel them out and understand where they were coming from, and to listen to them as well as have them listen to me. So it was very time consuming.

The mayor's salary was \$10,000, and that was the gross. That wasn't the net, of course. The only expenses that I had—and I think it only happened on maybe two occasions—was when I had to take someone to lunch on city business. The other thing that I did submit was my gas expenses, because I was putting a tremendous amount of money into gas. That only reimburses you for some of the expenses. I never ever submitted big bills for anything, because I think that the public as well as the council made it clear that they didn't want to pay the mayor any more money. I wasn't about to get some of the salary that I thought I should be earning by submitting expense accounts that were outrageous. They were always very reasonable.

I took the idea to the council of possibly having a form of government other than

council-manager. Of course, the defecate hit the fan on that one, because it was seen as a power play. I can understand why it would be, but that wasn't what it was.

I had developed a real distaste for the city manager-council form of government. That was because I had an opportunity to come to know that entirely too many of the decisions that were made as to how the city was and should be functioning were being made in the city manager's office. Furthermore, the city charter prohibits council members—the mayor being one—from interfering in the city manager's work, which can make it very difficult.

Later on, when Chris Cherches was city manager, I had reason to believe that he gave instructions to his department heads that they were not to deal with me on this level, and that I should be dealing directly with him. I felt that I should be free to talk to anyone in the city hall that I wished, so I challenged him. I went to him and said, "I understand that you've told a lot of your department heads that they are not to deal with me. I want that order changed." He kind of hangdog denied having made it, but shortly thereafter an order went out saying that they were to deal with me, but he was to be informed of everything that took place.

The earlier experience with Etchemendy made me realize the *power* that city managers have. For instance, we ran into a lot of serious problems in the building department with very questionable behavior on the part of a lot of the city inspectors. If you prohibit a member of the council or the mayor from getting in there and asking these questions, then all of a sudden one day you read about it in the paper. The problem is not that the public is angry with the head of the building department or the city manager—they want to know why the council didn't know these things. You don't know, because they won't

tell you. The person who serves as the city manager is an unelected person with no duty or responsibility to the public. He or she can get away with those things an elected person cannot—or should not—be allowed to.

I began to think that what I had always considered a good system really was not a good system. I believe that the person who is going to hang by his or her heels and toes out there where the public is concerned is the one that ought to be making those decisions. I have no problem with it being an entire mayor-council sort of thing, but I did not like this thing in the city charter that says that you cannot interfere with the city manager. That city manager should be taking orders from the council. He is, in a sense, but the council is not telling this person everything that should be done. If you're just able to deal with a little dab—you tell him you want to check an ordinance or something—well, he'll do those little things. But in the meanwhile there are a hundred other things that are being done in that same place that you know nothing about. The city manager obviously can't make a report to the city council on everything that's done.

One of the goals in life of the city manager is to keep climbing this ladder. They go into one city and try to establish a reputation so they can move on to the next. They don't have sufficient background in the history of the city, and knowing where a city is at in a particular time is not, in my opinion, a sufficient commitment to the interests of the city. So I have always felt that someone who was appointed and who was not accountable to the public should not be in the position of wielding as much power as the city manager does under our form of government. When I made a public statement to that effect, the newspaper picked up on it and was very heavily supportive of the city-manager form

of government. They felt it took the kind of city-of-Chicago-politics out of it and made it more professional. There is some truth in that.

However, about that same time they did a very flattering story on the mayor of Baltimore, and how successful he had been in doing wonderful things for the city. I found it very ironic because he headed up a strong mayor form of government and was able to get things down. Of course, I responded to the newspaper. I said that that was precisely one of my points, because he had the power to make things move like that; therefore, he was really a more effective person to head up the city government as city manager. But I also knew that there was very little likelihood that this would get passed by the council, because I was still only one of seven with a vote.

I felt strongly about this issue, regardless of whether or not it would happen in the future—it was something we should seriously think about at the very least, we ought to change the city charter so that council members would have more authority in city government. One of the ways that I felt that that could be accomplished was by assigning a member of each council to a major department. For instance, a member of the council would be responsible for the police, fire, building, or planning departments—that sort of thing. Part of their job would be to know everything that was going on there. They in turn would keep the council fully informed, knowing full well that they would be responsible to the voting public for what was going on. This arrangement could end a situation which I saw arise many times when someone would ask a question and I would say, “I don’t know, you’ll have to ask the city manager.” That’s embarrassing as well as frustrating.

When running for office, council members would understand that that was going to be

one of their functions as a council member. If they were unwilling to fill that role, if they didn’t have the time for it or the inclination, obviously they should not be running for office. The public, as well as other council members, would have a right to expect that of them.

When I proposed an increase in salary for the mayor, I also proposed one for the council members, who were making \$9,000 at that time. I recall making the statement that if someone were hired to head up a business—as I had been elected supposedly to head up the City of Reno—and he agreed to work for \$10,000, the employer would not hire him. They would feel that if that was all that person was worth, they didn’t want him.

Most people operated under the impression that it was not a full-time job. It was a citizen form of government in which you should not expect to be overly compensated. But such a low salary limits the kinds of people who can or who are willing to run for office. You either have to have a substantial income or outside savings so that you don’t need that income as a part of your everyday living expenses. It either has to be that or elect someone who is retired and can survive on their income. A bad alternative is to hire a person who has a full-time job, and consequently does not have the time to put into his elected position

Sparks has now raised its salary for its mayor, and so has Reno. The county commission members are also considerably better compensated. They’re a bit more realistic now—like, the mayor is making \$18,000 now. That’s an 80 percent increase over what it was. Pete Sferrazza, the present mayor of Reno, has a law practice. I suppose between the two jobs, he makes an adequate living. But that’s not a judgment that I am prepared to make, because I still think that if

the people of the city want a full-time mayor, then they'd better be willing to pay that person's salary. In my opinion, the \$18,000 would still have to be doubled in order to make it right.

During my campaign, I had told the public the things that I wanted to do, so when I got in office there were no real surprises. I wanted Reno to have its own Planning Commission. We had a Regional Planning Commission at the time, but everything was breezing through them, just like it was breezing through the Reno City Council. So I felt that we had to have a gaming policy. I felt that the public should have an opportunity to be heard on the matter, and that their wishes should be, to the very best of our ability, respected in trying to develop a growth policy in this community.

At that time Harrah's wanted approval to expand and add a tower. I knew that the kind of expansion that Harrah's was looking for was precisely the thing that the public didn't want any more of at that time. And if the public had had a chance to vote on it, it would have been *overwhelmingly* defeated.

Early on in my mayoral term I got a lot of heat from the hotel-casino industry, because they really felt that I was on their backs. I always recognized that economically they were the major contributors to the tax base in this state, and they provided so many jobs, so it wasn't that at all. I *never* hated the gaming, and I don't to this day. This state has made a choice that this is where they want to be, and I think the people are satisfied with that. What they don't want is to sacrifice what they see as their quality of life in order to expand that industry.

Early on the casino people really thought that I was anti-casino, and it was difficult to convince them that I wasn't. Eventually,

though, I think that in that area of business in the city, they began to trust me and to believe what I was saying. I also developed a better understanding of the problems that they had to deal with. It became a sort of comfortable relationship at least. But they never affected my votes at the table, because I was still opposed to a lot of expansion.

The development community was another matter. Some areas of the business community were on my back constantly, charging me with being responsible for a no-growth attitude. I'd been taking a lot of what I thought were undeserved shots. But I have also realized that these same interests are still making it very difficult to get anything done in this community.

There was a story in the paper that I had actively dissuaded some desirable industries from locating in this community, which infuriated me because it was a flat-out lie. Bill Myers, I believe, owned the largest real estate company in town at that time. I was told by a member of his staff that he said I had literally turned away several businesses that were interested in settling in Reno. I really hit the ceiling when I heard it, because it was untrue. Completely untrue. It apparently had come out of a remark made by Ernie Martinelli, who was a banker don in Las Vegas. I don't know whether he was in print or had made a speech or what, but he apparently made the claim that I had intentionally diverted several businesses from coming into the state, which, as I said, was just a gross lie.

I called Bill Myers into the office to tell him what I thought about it, and I challenged him at that time to go public and name these businesses that I had supposedly turned away. He did nothing, but the rumors persisted. I went to the press with it and told them what had happened and challenged Martinelli or Myers to come up with a list of these

businesses. But they wouldn't say *which* industries, because it was a lie.

In turn, I charged them with generating exactly that climate, which they tried to blame me for. They repeatedly made these allegations about me, but they were in fact telling an untruth to somebody out there who wasn't going to want to come into this area. I was really furious. I said, "Either put up or shut up, because this isn't true." That was the last I heard of it from that particular group. Those two were probably more minor players in the efforts to get me out of city hall from the day I arrived. But the charges were always present.

As mayor, my *main* concern was the growth issue and the multiple issues within it, such as the availability of water, water quality, air quality, and affordable housing. Outside of growth, I felt that we needed a far stronger ethics policy. I also felt that the people of the city had to be brought more into government participation—in other words, citizen participation. I felt that we definitely needed a broader-based level of boards and commissions, because they had been so heavily oriented in the direction of whatever they were dealing with. There were very few women, practically no minorities, so there needed to be more balance put into that.

In a lot of areas, I enjoyed a degree of success. One area was the Civil Service Commission, which deals with the city and with city employees. In the past, it appeared to have been the attitude that businessmen were the best equipped to understand those problems. I felt that had to change, because the city also had a problem with its affirmative action hiring policies that eventually had to be dealt with through a court order. The city hired at least as many women as men, so I made recommendations which put Bernice Martin, a black woman who was a nurse, on

the Civil Service Commission. We also put Carlos Romo, a man who was Hispanic and had his doctoral degree, on the commission. The city is full of people who are qualified who are not only business people. I think that was proved time and again in many of the appointments that I recommended and were approved by the council

But I had lots of other problems with the council, particularly when it came to power on boards and commissions, such as the Airport Authority. There were battles over that. I felt that it needed a citizen representative, because the representatives were flyers or owned their own airplanes or had that kind of interest in things. I fought for it, but was not able to accomplish that for a long time until I ultimately had Jean Stoess appointed. Jean, of course, was a very competent person, and brought the citizen point of view to the board at that time.

The group that always gave me fits, that I was never able to deal with, was the Planning Commission. Once we had a planning commission, I simply was not able to get anyone who felt as I did about growth or who was even moderate about it. I really wanted planning commission people to at least be middle-of-the-roaders. The result of the early Reno Planning Commission was that they were just gung-ho on growth, and they reflected the attitudes of the people who appointed them from the council. That's exactly what it amounted to. Since I was the only advocate of moderating growth, it was always a six-to-one vote.

For instance, if you had people appointed who were in the nursery business in a very modest way, all of a sudden they got to be *huge* nurseries. There were also architects and other people in development. Then you obviously had firms that built or repaired streets, and engineering firms that worked

with them. Those were the kinds of people that were getting appointed to the planning commission, with a few exceptions. I was able to get a couple of people, but I was never able to get a majority that really felt the need to slow down growth and to say *no* to a lot of developments that I believed were very unwise.

The Planning Commission was just a body that made recommendations; however, I don't know how many times I heard members of the council say, "Well, I do not want to go against the recommendation of the Planning Commission." They said, "We've appointed this commission. If we don't listen to them, why have them?" All the while they have the prerogative of appointing someone who comes from the exact position that they do, which is frustrating.

Frustrating is not a word that I especially like to use publicly, but I did then, because it was like being stuck between a rock and a hard place. You knew what had to be done, but you didn't have the votes to get it done and couldn't sway anyone. No one on the council moved in that first year with a few exceptions. Janice Pine and Bill Wallace occasionally opposed something, or at least tried to alter something, but otherwise it was just right down the line—"we're going to approve everything."

Of the people on city council, Bill Wallace and Janice Pine always did their homework. When Ed Oaks was on the council, Ed was considered the financial expert. He had a very lengthy banking background, so he could deal with financial questions that came to the table. But I doubt if Ed ever looked at his packet of issues outside of the economic concerns. His votes strongly echoed the fact that in Ed's mind, the economy took absolute first place over all of the other concerns—whether it was water, too much growth too fast, lack of

housing, or anything. He just simply came from the philosophy that economics came first.

As far as Bruno and Ed Spoon were concerned, I don't recall whether they opposed anything, because it's been over eight years since I worked with them. I can't say absolutely that they never opposed anything, because they may well have. But certainly the overwhelming numbers of their votes—and all the council votes, as a matter of fact—were six to one. For instance, they were six to one for expansion of Harrah's; they were six to one for approval of the Peppermill, though it had not been approved initially; they also approved the Gold Dust, which, thank God, never got off the ground downtown. The Gold Dust was an absolute mish-mash job, where they'd taken old rooms and given them approval for the 100 rooms needed to build a casino in Reno. Ugh! With 500 rooms, the Gold Dust at that time would have required 11 more police officers, another police car, probably, and an additional \$400,000 in school costs. It would've created 70 more tons of air pollutants in an area which was already heavily polluted. It would've also increased the population by 958 people, according to the numbers that were given to me at the time.

The Florentine was another proposed hotel-casino that they didn't proceed with. Economically they weren't equipped to build the thing.

Some of the casinos were low quality places. For a while some people were talking about Reno concentrating on having only high quality casinos that would attract wealthier people. But I don't believe that that's a decision government should be involved in. It's responsibility is to make sure that whatever project comes in can be supported by resources in the area and is not going to be a detriment in any way. Those are the things

government should deal with. If somebody wants to build a place that is less than upbeat, that decision is theirs.

In mid-1979 we began talking and hearing about the MGM Grand expansion. It was a very large expansion they wanted—almost 1,000 rooms, as I recall. MGM knew that they were going to have trouble with this, because the council was talking about the sewer problem and how much it would take to accommodate the expansion. The Regional Planning Commission had put out information dealing with the problems of air quality in that area, and how many new traffic trips a day they were expecting and so forth. This was towards the end of October.

I questioned the wisdom of the MGM expansion because of the limited water supply. I didn't want the community to be put in the position of subsidizing future hotel-casino growth through higher water rates, because Sierra Pacific had come in just a few weeks before this and said that we'd have a water shortage in 1981 and 1982. Then all of a sudden they came back and softened it. They said the water supply was sufficient. But the state water engineer's office said at that time that just the subdivisions and condos that had already been approved *exceeded* Sierra Pacific's water availability at that time.

On top of its water requirements, the MGM expansion would require 92,800 daily gallons of sewer capacity. The city then had only 60,000 gallons of capacity, if I remember right. Then the MGM had some kind of a plan where it was going to give up some fixtures in the hotel to get the additional sewer capacity it needed. Sewage capacity was really short then, and we weren't due to finish this expanded sewer plan for about two more years. There was an allocation plan, so that the city could only allocate so much in a quarter. So the MGM contributed half a million dollars to

the sewer collateral plan so that they would be assured of the necessary sewage capacity. The council was told by the city attorney that he doubted that it was legal, but the council went ahead and approved it, anyway.

When I was running for office, I had spoken out against the sewer collateral plan. I felt it was giving unfair advantage to a select group of area developers at the expense of other people, who would have to sit and wait for sewage while the developers went ahead and did all their building. Who would know if any resources would be left by the time they got through? At any rate, it ultimately was found to be illegal by the attorney general's office. An opinion was rendered that ultimately did away with it, which I thought all along would be the case.

The MGM was looking at hiring 1,400 new people who were going to need housing and places to shop. Based on all these facts, the planning commission voted seven to two against recommending expansion. Thank goodness there was somebody at that time wise enough to say, "Hey, we can't handle this now..." But then the council had already approved an early start for Harrah's. In other words, they gave them approval to go ahead before they knew the sewer capacity would be available, and the same kind of a situation then arose again in the MGM thing. We were into what I considered a deficit spending of water, and a deficit spending of sewer. If you think deficit spending in the U.S. Government is awful, when you start into deficit spending where life-sustaining resources are concerned, you've really got a problem.

In fact, the city of Sparks filed a lawsuit against us in June of 1979 when I had been at the council for a few weeks. They were suing Reno over reckless allocation of sewer capacity as it related to the hotel-casino early starts. They were upset about it. Here we had

another city entity that could recognize the stupidity in this because they were dealing with growth problems similar to ours, but the city council was still ignoring them!

These things were pretty discouraging, and this made me more firmly resolved to keep on this path and to make them have to deal with these votes next time they came up for election. It made me absolutely convinced that I would not hesitate to remind the public of this when it was necessary. That was the only recourse I had to those actions to which the majority of the people in this community were opposed. Sometimes people would come down to the meetings and back me up and give support.

When the city council was discussing the MGM Grand's bid for expansion, I went to talk with MGM's chairman, Barry Brunette. We hadn't even exchanged a dozen words, and Mr. Brunette said that they would be willing to provide day care. I don't think it would have been free, but instead would have been maybe low cost, based on the employee's ability to pay. MGM also agreed and *did* put up \$400,000 for low-cost housing.

When the day care issue came to the Reno City Council, there was a lot of dispute or argument over it. Apparently, many of the area businesses saw this as a precedent-setting step. I had a strong sense that these businesses had been in touch with a number of the council members, because all of a sudden at the council table, we got this argument that we shouldn't be forcing businesses to do this kind of thing. The interesting point about this was that Reno was written up in a national magazine at that time. It was an individual publication about top firm people that deal with child care. The article praised the city of Reno for attempting to move in this direction. Here we had MGM saying they're willing

to do it, and the council wouldn't approve it. That did it in. This was the first council I worked with, before Peter and Florence came on, but the issue still exists today. We even have Barbara Vucanovich, our conservative Republican Congresswoman, talking in terms of child care and admitting that there's a problem.

Businesses that provide child care across the country have known for years that it has been beneficial to them. They have less absenteeism for which they have to pay-, they have less employee turnover; they have fewer problems all around. So it has not been a major, costly item for them in doing business. I think that with some foresight on the part of the council, we could've had that start, but it went down the tube.

One of the things that was very troublesome to me was that prior to 1981, the council almost automatically approved extensions to building projects which were sitting on the waiting list because there had been a recession at the time. If they were not building, it wasn't because they didn't have approvals—they did, even though they kept blaming *me* as though they didn't. [laughs] But the fact was that they didn't want to build because there was a recession during that time. Costs were too much to build and so they were coming in and getting approvals, and leaving these things sit on the shelf until they were ready to go. That was happening, so we had this huge backlog of approved projects.

Falcon's Nest was the first real test... It was like a 500-unit condo that now sits out in the north end of town—that cement monstrosity. About a month after I arrived at city hail, Falcon's Nest representatives came back to get an extension, and I didn't want to give it to them. Janice Pine had voted against it in the

first place. At any rate, the owner threatened to sue. If memory serves me right, he never did. I can't remember whether he was from an outside area. I think he was, because a lot of them built out in other areas, went as far as they could, and then moved in here. When they finished here, they'd move on someplace else.

There was that problem on the South Virginia strip cropping up more and more, too, because there had been a lot of approvals granted out there. Fortunately, many of them to this day have not been built. That only alludes to the problem I touched on earlier. Here were all these projects that had been approved, but you couldn't *guess* that they weren't going to be followed through. You can't keep allocating waters that have already been given to someone else. If a project is not going to be completed, it should be taken off the list and kicked loose. Then it should have to be approved once again.

The county had approved a lot of big projects out on the south end of town, and there were a lot of other developments that were going in—like, Harrah's owned property out there. They were talking about this huge development out quite a ways. Then there was another talk involving Hilton. But Harrah's owned property out there at that time. When Meadowood and some of those buildings in that area went in, a property on ideal corner lots was all being saved for something. It was always my opinion that if gaming was permitted to go out there, that's what it would be used for: big casinos all the way out.

The community had been talking for a long time about downtown redevelopment. I know Moya Lear and I walked through some of those areas one day trying to get a sense of what could be done, what kind of recommendations to make, and who wanted committees to work on these different things.

It really did need upgrading, and still does. I *pushed* for redevelopment in the downtown area. I must say that the plan as it is evolving now is not what I had in mind, but it is an improvement and there *should* be more to come. There were some of us who felt that there ought to be more of a mall-type appearance on Virginia Street. Businesses themselves did not want that. I think that there were those who were concerned about how we would get taxi cabs and buses in and out of there.

Some downtown redevelopment took place before I left. The downtown interests had to get their heads together and decide what they were willing to settle on. It was probably less elaborate than originally planned; however, it's turning out to be more costly than the initial estimates were. I know that we talked in terms of \$30 million, which was not going to come out of the general budget in the city. It was going to be paid for by a property tax collected from the tax increment district in the downtown area. This tax base was to be used to pay for downtown redevelopment. Then Harrah's Auto Collection got into it, as did a very active local group, headed up by Ben Dasher. They put a lot of time and effort into saving Harrah's Auto Collection and putting it in downtown Reno, which I agreed was a good idea. I'm still not sure how the funding is working because we're still working on that. We know it's going. I don't know whether it's going to look like the initial architectural and landscaping plans that we saw. I don't know what's going to happen, but it will be an asset in downtown Reno.

We also looked at the possibility of acquiring the post office on Mill and South Virginia, which is no longer the main branch in Reno. But the government wasn't interested, at least at that time, and I don't suppose they

are now. Of course, it's a building that the taxpayers paid for initially. They ought to just give it back to the city. It is a nice building and with the Mapes there, they could've had a lot of nice shops and things done with it.

There were also plans to do things with the river, and there still are. Of course, whatever is done with the river in downtown Reno should not interfere with the ability of the water to flow through this community, because it's a source of drinking water and it is our lifeline. Any plans with that river have to be very carefully handled.

Some interesting things happen when you walk door-to-door on your own behalf. I'll never forget one man who had a small business of his own. We were talking about growth in the area and he was talking about politicians who were "on the take." I said to him, "Well, that is never going to happen with me."

He says, "Don't give me that crap, lady. When you get there you're going to be like all the rest of them." [laughs] I never forgot that man. He lived right over near us. I saw and heard more of that attitude as I went along. People go off and vote but they honestly believe that everybody who is elected is going to be a crook. They really do. I think that I was able to dispel this. I think that it was one of the greatest services that I provided to this community during my term of office: I came to be known as being honest, I could not be bought, and I did not change my attitudes or opinions.

Someone wrote in an editorial that I softened my attitude about gaming after I took office because I had come to understand how the gaming community functions. There is *some* truth in that—a little bit. I did come to understand what their role in a community is, and what I thought it *ought* to be. I also

thought that we were far more of a one-industry state at that point in time, with all our eggs in one basket. If gaming ever went sour, and California or some other place picked up on it, we could be faced with some *very* serious problems. I also understood the gaming industry's limitations in its ability to make money.

There are a lot of things that they still do which I disapprove of wholeheartedly, and I have never softened my attitude about building hotel-casinos. Nor have I changed my mind on the subject of expanding while only having limited resources.

Bruno Menicucci, Marcel Durant and Clyde Biglieri were running for re-election to the city council at the time that I was running for mayor. They all had very pro-growth voting records: they had approved the MGM, the Florentine, the Peppermill, the Sundowner, the Eldorado, the Sands, Circus Circus, Harold's, and Harrah's addition. Some of these recommendations had been made against the approval of the Regional Planning Commission.

The Regional Planning Commission was comprised of people from all three local government entities: Washoe County, Sparks, and the city of Reno, with each entity appointing one or two people—I've forgotten the precise number—to this board. At any rate, at that time it was not a body that was controlled entirely by the majority of Reno City Council members as the Reno City Planning Commission eventually became.

I appointed myself to the Planning Commission right after I was elected. They had a planning staff, which was beginning to formulate a lot of reasonable questions about traffic congestion, air quality, and about the resources in the community and how they should be allocated. That was an

attitude that never really gained acceptance at the Reno council table. I don't know how they expected planning to take place without knowing, for instance, how much water you had, or how much of that you wanted to allocate to economic diversification. They also didn't discuss how much water it would take to provide new homes and the related businesses that would move into a community as a result. There would be new businesses like barber shops, grocery stores, shopping centers—all of these things that come in, creating a *humongous* need for water, as the kids would say.

The water question has been kicking around for years and years and years, and I finally reached the conclusion that the people who wield power and who had great interest in developing this community were only going to be satisfied with the kind of water numbers that they could generate themselves. For instance, if I'm running a business and I hire someone to do a study for me, and if that person comes back with a highly negative study, chances are I'm not going to listen to him. I'm going to find somebody who is going to tell me what I *want* to hear. I reached the conclusion that that was taking place.

I think that in a way, those who were already on the council—like Bruno, Spoon, Ed Oaks and Bill Granata—already had a mindset before I ever arrived at city hall. I think that the people who wielded influence—particularly those with an economic interest in growth in the city of Reno—were already *certain* of where they stood. So once I arrived, I don't feel they had to influence them any more at all. I think then the job was to get the new council members into their corner.

Ed Oaks passed away when he was on the city council and we had to approve a new member. As I recall, there were about 26

serious applications that we'd gone through as people applied for the post. When it came time to make an appointment, I nominated Barbara Weinberg, who's very bright. She was a Republican, but I didn't care, because I knew she could do the job. Besides, it was a non-partisan office. Bill Wallace, I think, nominated Jim Thornton, and Janice Pine nominated John Francis. who was a banker. She was interested in him because Oaks had been a banker, if my memory serves me, and she felt that another man of that caliber would be useful in that position.

We were unable to really move off base, because everybody was staying only with their own nominees. We went through three votes, I think, and Janice dropped her nomination of Francis and moved over and supported Jim Thornton. Jim didn't have enough votes, because he still had just Bill and Janice. I was the only one supporting Barbara. so nobody had four votes. Then Stan Greene's name somehow got in acre—I think Ed Spoon nominated him. Stan Greene was the manager of the Old Town Mall on South Virginia at the time. His name all of a sudden popped up with support from Spoon, Menicucci, and McClelland. There were only six of us, so that would have been the three. He wound up with three votes and Francis was gone so then we had three votes for Greene, two for Jim Thornton, and one for Barbara. I knew I wasn't going to pick up any votes for her.

Everyone had been interviewed by the council in personnel sessions. I don't remember whether they were open sessions, but I guess under the law they had to be. I had never even considered Greene, and I had to delay the vote to find out more about him. I did know that he was serving on the Citizen Policy Planning Advisory Committee, which was really a citizen's group that I had had good faith in. They did have a lot of social concerns

and were making what I thought were good recommendations. That was all I knew or was able to find out about Stan Greene. But since I knew where the other two were, I switched my vote and made the fourth vote for Stan Greene.

Once that vote was cast, I saw a number of developers in the audience stand up and practically *cheer*, and they were patting each other on the back. I got suckered. Bill Wallace had changed his vote, too. He and I must have come to the same recognition about the same time, because he came into my office later on and he was mad at himself; and I was *furious* with myself. I felt we'd really been suckered, and we were, believe me! The thing that made me so angry with myself is that the people who had been supporting Greene—McClelland, Spoon and Menicucci—were the people that were voting in the opposite direction from me on everything. So I should have *suspected* something. It made me so mad that I was so *dumb* that I didn't get it, and Bill felt the same way...oh, boy!

There was a time when Ed Spoon had made comments about my leadership ability. He had never wanted me there and I beat him for mayor, so obviously he didn't have kind feelings toward me. He said it was the mayor's job to be more communicative and cohesive with the *council*. My attitude was that I wasn't there to be more cohesive with the council, with which I had very little in common where the future of the city was concerned. I saw my charge to be true to the things that I had advocated when I ran for office, and to the mandate that the voters had given me. When you have that kind of a schism, it is very hard to find much which you can agree upon.

Janice Pine and some of the members of the council were quoted in a newspaper article as saying they were concerned that I was getting

prior commitments on votes from Florence Lehnert and Peter Sferrazza. They obviously concluded that I wouldn't have supported them if I didn't think they were going to be there when I needed them for a vote. I was so surprised at this, because I really never traded votes—never a single vote. Essentially that kind of an attitude makes me a very poor politician in the eyes of the people. *Quid pro quo* is how the system works, and I have never been able to deal with making a trade.

In the first place, if you were inclined to that sort of thing, you would only be making trades for important things. If someone wanted my vote on something that was important to them, they're not going to settle in return for some little pee-diddling item. They would want my vote on something. But I couldn't see operating this way, because these things were all so tied together. I could not give up my attitude about water or, for instance, a two percent rate of growth that was *not* to be compounded annually in exchange for a vote to keep out a Gold Dust! Besides, I shouldn't have to trade off something else—I don't care what it is. I understand that's how politics works, but I just cannot deal with it. Having really come to grips with that, I know I will never run for office because it does inhibit your effectiveness. In my opinion, vote-trading is unethical. Despite what some of the people on the council thought about this vote-trading thing, it was *not* going on. None of them approached me about it. If they had, I would have made it clear that it wasn't.

I started work on an ethics law in 1980. Common Cause, a national organization, has always been a major leader in honest government. I was a member of Common Cause off and on, but I don't think I was right at that time. They had facilities available to provide information on ordinances that had been passed in other communities. I told

them that I wanted samples of good ethics codes in those communities where they had been challenged by law. We weren't going to put anything in writing that could be overturned because it was illegal. At any rate, it took them a while to compile. There were ordinances from the East Coast and from Arizona. I had about a good half-dozen, very comprehensive, court-tested ethics laws.

We had an ethics law in the state of Nevada, but it was really nothing. I don't know when it was passed, but I would imagine it had been on the books for ages. To this day, they try to make changes down at the legislature in ethics legislation, and it's difficult to get those people who have to live under the law to accept anything tougher than what's already on the books. Politicians are great about discussing ethics, so long as they don't have to adhere to them.

Louis Test was the city attorney at that time, and I really didn't want to have to draft this thing myself because I wanted to make sure it was all right. I did study law, and I think I had a good sense of what we wanted to do legally in Reno that had been tested elsewhere. I knew what I wanted in an ethics code that I considered critical to *any* ethics code. When I got all these papers together. I made a rough draft of what I wanted and asked the attorney to draft an initial ordinance, which is the route I suppose one is expected to go through in order to get something like that accomplished. Several months later I got this copy out of the city attorney's office. He had assigned it to an assistant district attorney, and in my opinion, it was absolute garbage. It was barely an iota tougher than the existing state law. If we were going to go with something like that, we didn't need to do it at city hall—we already had that. I just gave up in despair and decided to draft it myself. That took a lot of time putting it together.

After I came up with a draft, Louis Test didn't say anything. Louis was an elected official and he didn't have to do anything that he didn't want to do. It wouldn't have done me any good to say. "Louis, I don't like this. Write a tougher ordinance." It may have been that he really felt the draft was too tough, or that he didn't want to antagonize the votes which he could still count on in city council. But whatever his reasons, he was never unpleasant about it.

In May of 1982, this thing had already been in the works for about a year. At that time, it went into the hands of the council, at which time they decided they had to have some workshops with it. I gave them the draft to read prior to the time that we went to any work sessions or meetings so that they would know what it was all about.

After the draft was reviewed, I immediately ran into some major objections, mostly from Janice Pine and Jim Thornton. Janice Pine, for instance, said she felt the state law was adequate. And it wasn't. I think she objected mostly because of the gifts and trusts that were involved. Thornton's problems also had to deal with the trusts and the fact that he didn't think that morality could be legislated. But I think they had trust interests and didn't want to have to disclose them. That's an argument that comes up all the time when it comes to an ethics law. But the fact is that they didn't like the idea that, for instance, members of the family also had to file financial statements, and this true of every good ethics law in the country. It's so obvious *why*.

Some of that went on in this city: if you had a little something not quite as neat as you would want the public to know about it, you put it in somebody's name in the family. I had a hard time getting disclosure accepted, and I had a time with the trusts. One of Janice's explanations for not wanting to provide

information on family members' finances was that she thought it would make her children targets for kidnapping and blackmail. I never could understand that reasoning.

Janice's lack of support on the bill as it was initially presented did not come as a surprise to me, because I was aware of the kinds of interests she had. I knew where a lot of her money in the election had come from. If you know these things, you know the people who get money from all of these interests don't like having to report, because someone has said to them, "Hey, I'll give you some money, but I don't want my name..." That's what's wrong with the money situation in government, and certainly was not just at the Reno City Council table. It's been in government across the board.

The ethics law that did come out said that candidates seeking municipal office in Reno would have to disclose the source of every campaign contribution. That's what ultimately came out. My initial presentation of this code had required that everything over \$50 be disclosed. Jim Thornton got a little pushed with this and said, "Well, if we're going to do it for \$50, let's make them require everything."

I said, "That's fine with me."

Then he took another tack and said, "All right, if we do that, then we ought to include *volunteers*." In other words if a person volunteered to walk, man a telephone, or something else, you would show that as a contribution. I think that he hoped that that would turn me away from the whole thing.

While I thought it was pretty ridiculous, I said, "All right, if that's the only way I can get it, we'll do it that way." I really had a struggle trying to get this deal.

I had to make some concessions that I really didn't like to make, either. For instance, gifts only had to be disclosed if they came

from the immediate Reno area. That's ridiculous. One example—and this is only an example—of what might happen, is this: somebody here on the Reno council deals with the business interest in some roundabout way, and this person in Reno says, "Well, I can't do anything for you here in Reno because it'll be on the books, but I've got a great piece of property up at the lake that's yours for half price." Those are the way these things take place and, in my opinion, the public is entitled to know. I believe that very strongly.

Now we're going through a big hassle back in Washington with these very kinds of things. The public's right to know takes preference over a candidate's or an incumbent's right to privacy. Anyone that feels that they must have that much privacy with their financial doings ought not to be running for or sitting in a public office. If they don't want the public to know, then don't run. Of course they say, "Well, it discourages good people from running." It does not discourage good, honest people from running at all.

Another thing that the ethics law did was to prohibit local public officials from acting on matters in which they had a direct financial interest. The state law deals with that in a little better manner now, too, incidentally. At any time when you had a financial interest, all you had to do was just disclose the fact that you had it, and then you could go ahead and vote. I will say, however, that I don't remember that happening—anyone disclosing something and then voting on it anyway.

The ethics law did pass, except Jim Thornton voted against it and the Associated General Contractors were against it, too. The AGC was a major contributor to campaigns, and the newspaper publishes where these contributions come from. If the public is not as aware or up to date on these facts, then they

can find out at that time. They know that the AGC pours some of the money into—and this is just an example, again—into a Thornton, or into a Menicucci, or into a Spoon...they know *who* is putting money into those candidates. I don't care whether it's to local, county, state, or even federal people—they say, "That does not buy anything." That is the biggest bunch of garbage, because we know it buys something; we know it does! All you have to do is take a look at the voting records in Washington: the PACs [Political Action Committees] are pouring monies in there by the tons, and you go see if anybody who accepted money from them voted against what they wanted. If you or anyone in your family has any kind of financial interest, you *cannot* vote on this thing—that's the way it should be.

I think that getting the ethics law passed was important, I really do. I think getting planning into the city of Reno forced the public, businesses, and everyone in this community to look at planning not as something evil, but as something beneficial to everyone if done properly. Progress has been made with planning, but there are still so many weak areas that I almost despair at times. It seems as though we'll never bring all the pieces together. We need to look at projects not in and of themselves, but in a cumulative way.

There are many cities that have passed tough planning ordinances. The one in Petaluma, California, was taken all the way to the Supreme Court, because they were putting major restrictions on growth. But one of the problems with an ordinance is that it can be *changed*, and Reno's has been changed. Some of the changes were good, and some were not. If I were to get involved in this thing now—which I can't, because of personal reasons—I would not attempt to accomplish

things through an ordinance at city hall or the state. I would go to an initiative petition, and force it that way.

In January, 1981, I had triple-bypass surgery, but I wasn't off work that long. Everything went very well. I've always been a hard charger, and I worked the mayor's job in the same way, so it wasn't any stress of the job that did it. Rather, it was an accumulation of a lot of things. I had had a heart attack years before. They weren't sure if I had another heart attack and they didn't want to wait to find out. They took me in for the tests right away, and when they found that my arteries were all plugged up, they wanted me in surgery as soon as possible. Nine days later I was ready to go back to work. I really felt fine. My surgeon, Dr. Lurie, said to me, "There isn't any patient of mine going back to work in nine days."

I said, "Why not? I feel fine."

I think it was the next week that I went back, and I felt great. I've had no more problems to this day.

In 1981, Pete Sferrazza and Florence Lehnert were elected to the city council. I think they were elected because the community felt I needed support and help in getting my programs adopted. Peter was known because he had run before. His positions on growth, along with those of Florence, were very compatible with mine. Peter replaced Stan Greene, I think, and Florence replaced Bill Wallace.

Florence was really an absolute political unknown in the area, because she had never been involved in city government. It was all new to her, so it was difficult—perhaps more difficult for her than it might have been for some others. But she worked very hard at it. I did not find her difficult to work with. There

is a learning process that anyone who goes to city hall has to go through.

Spoon didn't run, and Jim Thornton came in in his district. Jim Thornton was the choice of Bill Wallace and Pine. He beat Merle Snider. They were the two top vote-getters in the primary, but Thornton beat Snider in the run-off. Snider had connections with a union, and I'm not sure how well he could have withstood pressures from the construction industries to support things if he had been elected.

Jim Thornton was a former president of the Associated General Contractors and had been a paving contractor, although I think he had sold his business or was in the process of selling it about that time. But to me, when I hear AGC, Associated General Contractors, this is the group I had been trying to deal with all the time I had been at city hall—and very unsuccessfully, I might add. At any rate, I liked Jim Thornton as a person, because he came in and talked with me. He said, as so many others did, “We have more in common than you think.” But we *didn't*, and that also was borne out in later days, because I simply could not see how someone from Jim's background could believe in the same things I did where growth management and control were concerned in the city. We were *worlds apart*, and Jim also had a terrible temper. He would really get furious at the council table...that's just where he came down. But he was an honest man.

Snider was a union man—he was a musician. I've always been a strong supporter of unions because of this working background of mine. I knew how important the evolution of unions had been in benefitting working men and women—how the working conditions had improved, how wages had improved—so it was very difficult for me to be outspoken against the construction trades. But the construction trades were closely allied with the Associated General Contractors and

the development interests because they saw that as their *job*. My attitude was, “Well, I understand this, but don't you understand that if all this growth continues, you're going to work yourself out of a job? Then what do you do—do you leave the community?” It would have been in *their* best interests, in my opinion, for the construction trade unions to support planned growth so that they would know that they would have a job five years down the road. But instead, they accepted this attitude: “We'll take everything we can get as far as we can get it.” That meant they would wind up having to bring all of these construction workers in from out of town and burn up the jobs that the locals should be working in. But I was never able to convince them of that. At any rate, I did endorse Merle Snider over Jim Thornton in that election, and did not regret it.

I think we all agreed that we had serious problems in the community. We'd talked about the water; we'd talked about air quality, we'd talked about the cost of living; we'd talked about transportation, streets, smog—all the things which are still besetting us. I was trying to develop some kind of a consensus, and after talking with Dick Scott, I kind of felt that we could at least work together on some of these things. His employment with Boomtown was outside of Reno in Washoe County. I just felt that I probably wouldn't always have his support, but there might be some times when I could get some help from him. His opponent, Millick, was not running an active campaign and was a total unknown. Scott obviously had a lot of political support from his service on the Washoe County Commission, and I felt he was going to be elected. I felt that the only thing to do was to endorse him and see if the endorsement would help get him in my corner on a few things.

I *never* knew where Dick Scott was going to come from. I felt that I really needed his support and help on that council, so when he first arrived at city hall, I made it a point to call out to Boomtown and set up an appointment to meet with him. I wanted to feel him out and talk to him about some of the things that I'd like to do. I did it that way rather than asking him to come into my office so that I wouldn't sound like a power-happy mayor. I intentionally went out there to see him, and he decided to keep me waiting, which put me in kind of a foul mood. We really didn't reach any kind of consensus on where he was going to go, but I never knew from one time to another where he was going to end up.

Dick was a disappointment to me. I think I got about what I expected from the other people I served with. But I really expected more of Dick. He had served as county commission chairman, and I felt his background would be helpful in ways. But Dick never showed any real interest in the city council, and I'm not sure why. However, after all, he was president of Boomtown at that time, which I'm sure was demanding a lot of his time. Maybe he was discouraged to "just" be a member of the city council, rather than being in a governing role or in a position of any high authority. I don't know. He may have been caught between two factions, which is another possibility. He may have felt that maybe he would have liked to have helped me with some of the things that I needed help on, but he also didn't want to alienate the other side over here. That could have been a part of his problem.

But my main problem with Dick Scott was that he showed up at council meetings absolutely unprepared to deal with things. I think we all had a sense that Dick barely opened his city council packages, which, incidentally, very often ran six inches in depth.

So maybe he didn't have a chance to do it or maybe he felt he was familiar enough with the material. I don't know. He was not a difficult guy to work with—he's very personable.

I felt that I was personally more effective with this council than with its predecessor, although I don't make close personal relationships. I honestly never had a close relationship with Florence, Pete, or any of them, because that's not my way. I have friends that were personal friends from the time I went to school, and I make life-long friends. But I *do not* make friends easily. I never was comfortable just being a glad-hander, which is another political liability. Really, it is. I found it very easy to be nice around people, and to be comfortable with them, but I was not interested in forming those kinds of personal relationships.

During the second part of my city council term, I know people got mad at me. Jim Thornton would *really* get mad at me, and Dick Scott and Janice Pine at times, too... all of them. But it never amounted to the kind of real vicious antagonism that existed with that first group on the city council. We accomplished a lot with the new group—we made the first steps. For instance, once the planning commission got going and our planning department was functioning, we got a profile that really had a lot of data. It took a long time to compile.

Robert Hunter was the head of the planning department, and he had just a staff of two, if memory serves me right. The department had been created by ordinance. It was created just before the first council went out back in April of 1981. The fact that we finally got this profile out during my administration was all right.

Robert Hunter was in a very unenviable position in compiling the profile, because he

was in the position of creating a document to try to please a council that he knew was split philosophically. His job, in my opinion, was to present the facts, and we'd deal with the rest of it. I did feel that he could count votes, too, just like everybody else. I did not see the kind of hard-hitting document that I wanted to see, which is not to say that everybody else was wrong. Maybe that was all we should have had at that time. I really wanted this document to recommend less than a three or three-and-a-half percent rate of growth annually. In the end the profile got through, but I never got the limitations that I wanted, though I didn't expect to get them all.

We had been going to public hearings, too, and getting input from there. There are two kinds of neighborhood meetings. I had neighborhood meetings when I ran for office, and I continued to have them after I was elected. But the kind of neighborhood meetings I'm talking about are community meetings. I wanted to have community meetings in a big facility, and some of the council agreed. We had all the community meetings in places that could hold 400 or 500 people, so that the people would have an opportunity to say how *they* wanted their city to grow. Of course, in addition to hearing from the general public, there was a well-orchestrated appearance by the development community at *every single* meeting. So they've got their right to appear, too. Those developers were smart. They would never send the same people to every meeting. For instance, you would see officers from the Associated General Contractors at city hall representing general development interests. You would see the developer, and the contractor, who had an interest in a specific project, would be there. They would bring in people from the construction industry, too. Another time there'd be an engineer or an architect. There would be a different person

from the Homebuilders or the Associated Vendors.... They're not fools.

The developers knew how to orchestrate these kinds of things, and they were very powerful. Where their own interests were concerned, they were *very well* informed and able to hire very good minds to perpetuate their attitudes and opinions. But fortunately, we must've outnumbered them some of the times, like forty or fifty to one. So the public was very supportive, which gave me a shot in the arm, because I thought, "OK. What I'm hearing from the public is that they are *essentially* in agreement with me." Not in everything, though, because I never expected everybody to agree with me on everything. But essentially they supported the direction that I saw. That's what they were saying "Give us direction. Control the growth. Don't spend resources we don't have. *Plan* for what's going in this community. Don't go through water shortages." I guess that's why I'd been elected, because I felt the majority in the public and I were attuned to begin with. I hadn't changed and they hadn't changed, and that really rubbed a lot of the council members. They felt that I used it to my advantage...of course I used it, because that's what I was there for. I was there to represent the city and the people in it, not special interests of any kind.

We didn't really advertise the meetings-I don't recall that we gave them a title or anything official. They were held maybe once a month at the different schools, so they would be easy to attend by the local people. At each one of the meetings, a different member of the council was the chair.

The first meeting that we held was in the northwest, and for a first meeting there was a very good turnout. The next one was at the university, which took in all of that area over there. That was a very large meeting. The next largest one was in southwest I can't remember

the name of the school, but it was absolutely packed. There was standing room only, and people were out the doors. It really surprised me, because that's a well-to-do area, and it also houses so many of the business interests. It was obvious that there was a schism between the well-to-do people in the southwest as to how they wanted their community to grow. I always felt that they had the most to lose. They, apparently, felt the same way, especially when they were putting tens of thousands of dollars into building a home and situating in an area where they don't want to be encroached upon by development.

There was a smaller turnout at the Pine School in the southeast, and not too great a turnout over there in the northeast. I think that was our last meeting. I walked out of the meeting that was held at Pine Middle School because I had heard the same story over and over and over from the developers. I'd gotten so sick of it that I finally just got up and walked out. The developers said they were offended, but I'm sure they weren't. They were probably glad to get rid of me. But they had an opportunity to make an issue of it and they did, so I had to admit that it had been rude for me to walk out. And I did say that. I said, "My mind hasn't changed a bit. I've heard it all before and I'm really tired of hearing it, but it was rude of me to walk out." So I wound up apologizing, but it didn't seem to hurt me politically at all.

The southeast was not what it is now, because that's all been put in new out there. It's practically a whole city in itself for being a no-growth community.... Because it has expanded a lot, the people out there have a stake in what's going on. I think as a result, they've become more active politically in the community, too. But I couldn't say what the attitude of the people in the community is today, because we have too many new people.

I have no political sense of where they come from and what brought them here. Plus, we've always had so many transient people.

Bill Eadington at the university was quoted in the paper around 1986 as saying: "...local government may have to devise a method for pushing back the costs of growth so that those who generate it"—in this case the gaming industry—"pay for it." Now once again we have a council that is trying to impose fees on new growth. They're having the same battle that's been going on for years and years by the development community, which is trying to head it off, to stop it. They don't want to pay these things, but we know that *somebody* has to. In my opinion, it's unfair to expect the people that have been here for years, and who have contributed to the economy of this community, to pick up the new costs of growth—which they have dearly indicated they don't want.

In 1981 and 1982 we wanted the housing community to build some low-to-moderate-cost housing, and they said they couldn't make enough profit at it. My attitude then was that you can't impose this kind of impact fees on the builders, because they're going to pass it on to the person that buys the home. But is that any more fair than passing it on to somebody else who was already here? Because that's what they're suggesting the alternative should be.

When I was mayor, I talked a great deal about economic diversification. I have never pretended to be the first one that did, because they had WIN [Western Industrial Nevada], and we did have a rather substantial warehousing industry. But even that was not generating a lot of the kinds of paying jobs that would permit people to cope with the accelerating cost of living in the city of Reno.

I think the city of Sparks has been more responsible in dealing with its problems than Reno has. They had some pretty good planning measures, and they were also diversifying—perhaps it was not necessarily because they were so wise, but because most of the warehousing industry lies out in that end of the community. Sparks was in a position that if no more hotel-casinos were built, their economy was pretty safe.

The city of Reno has been so heavily dependent upon the gaming and hotel industries that it was really very foolish. I think that Sparks did a lot of wise things long before we were able to convince anybody in Reno to do them. Reno could certainly expand its warehousing industry. But there were a lot of industries that people were not seeking to upgrade—bookbinding, for one thing, and also research in association with the university. Here we have a university town, and we didn't really have any industry that could or was interested in taking advantage of it.

In conjunction with the University of Nevada, WIN did a study about attracting new industry to Reno. They made some very solid recommendations, and even went to businesses to poll them on how they felt about moving to Reno and what the problems were. One of the most persistent answers that we got was the power of the gaming community. Many people didn't feel that their businesses would be very important in a community like ours. Some very good recommendations and support came out of that study and subsequent meetings. It has helped because there are some groups that now work very seriously on diversifying our economy. WIN is one of them, and there's also the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada [EDAWN] EDAWN works very hard bringing in new kinds of development. Kevin Day, who was a bank officer, was the head of EDAWN.

There was a trip to Switzerland in November, 1981, that was put together by a group of business people that I was working with. With the exception of \$1,300, the business community paid for the whole trip. We considered the trip to be fairly successful. I don't know how wise it was, except that we could attract some foreign investment money into the area. There was a lot of that taking place at that time. It was their impression that it might help to get us on the road to diversification. Bob Pearce was involved with WIN, but I don't know what he was doing at that time. Vein Meiser was also interested in what was going on at that time. He is in warehousing. He had a lot of warehouses. Hans Wolfe, a vice president of First Interstate Bank, also went on the trip. It seemed when we needed an interpreter, Hans wasn't always there, so the language barriers were a bit of a problem.

There was nothing earthshaking that happened over there. We talked with people from Austria and Germany, of course, and a lot of French and Swiss people. I guess Kevin Day traveled to Europe frequently, and most of those' people did speak English, anyway. They expressed a lot of interest and asked questions about Nevada. They were very interested in the fact that we have no corporate tax, no state income tax, and that we are a freeport state.

I had high hopes that economic diversification would accelerate, and it *did*. Hotel-casino development has slowed now—there's no question about it. But it has slowed more out of their *own* need to slow it down than it has in an effort to accommodate the community's wishes. We have just seen the Peppermill get a large expansion. It's possible that some of these things that have been pending for years have been approved now.

There has also been another casino approved out near the airport.... Heaven help us if a plan ever goes down in that area. I happen to think it's too close to the airport for safety, and I also think it shouldn't be that near Wooster High School. Plus, the traffic problems in that end of town do not lend themselves well to another hotel-casino out there.

I don't have negative thoughts about the gaming industry. It plays too important a role in the economy of this state to put it down. Given our location and how we grew, I don't think that we would ever be in a position to even go after other kinds of industry if we didn't at least have the solid base here. So I don't have any problems with the gaming industry per se. But I do not believe it should be allowed to expand at will. The demanding taxes on the casino industry have never been overwhelming. Even today I think it's five and three-quarters percent at the state level.

I have never wanted to see Reno in the position of Las Vegas, where there is gaming in every single direction, scattered all over. That's always been a major concern of mine. Early on in my administration I said—and have said repeatedly—that to be healthy, every city has to have a healthy downtown core. Our downtown core happens to be hotel-casinos. That being the case, then we want it to be presentable and successful, because if you destroy downtown Reno, I don't know where you're going to go from there.

One of the alternatives is to scatter gaming all over the city, and it's showing unfortunate signs of moving south. We used to have a red line policy, but it has been gone for some time. My attitude is that that red line should not just encompass just half a dozen square city blocks. As part of the studies that have been done, the downtown core area is looked at now as going from city hall along the river clear to Keystone and includes the few blocks

the other side of the river down to the freeway. So there is a vast area there for putting in gaming hotel-casinos.

The reason for the hotel-casinos moving out is that land is cheaper out there, period. If they want to buy land downtown, it's expensive. But if you want to go into the gaming business you ought to be willing to buy expensive land. Then we have the Mapes, an historic building, which is empty. I happen to believe that the Mapes is a beautiful building. I think it's *ideally* suited for being renovated. If you want a hotel-casino, why go out and build one clear out on South Virginia Street when we've got that one right there where people can walk to it in the downtown area? Then there is also the Riverside, which is being purchased by the county so that county offices can be put in it.

Reno was facing some difficulties during this period of time in 1981. Sixty-five city employee positions had been cut due to Proposition 6. [Proposition 6 put a constitutional cap on property taxes, reducing revenues returned to municipalities between 1978 and 1980. [Ed.] As far as that was concerned, I was considered to be someone that was very much in tune with the public, but Proposition 6 was an area in which I disagreed with the majority of the public. The public today still does not want tax increases. They felt at that time that taxes were too high. They probably were, because they'd gone way up, but Proposition 6, in my opinion, would have placed a really disproportionate share of the tax burden on the *homeowner*. Back then, the reassessment of all of the downtown gaming property had not been done since 1972. I guess we had lost millions of dollars because of the failure to reassess down there. If that had gone through, their tax rates downtown would've been frozen

in position, which meant that that revenue would be gone forever, so Proposition 6 was really troublesome. I thought that there *had* to be better ways of controlling government expenses, and that gets back to the growth problems of the time.

As I've said before, it takes a minimum of 18 months for growth to catch up with itself. When there is rapid growth, streets have to be caught up, and at that time it cost about a million dollars a mile to put in a road. Obviously, it also costs a lot of money to buy land to build schools. In one instance when the Gold Dust downtown came in, I was still trying to push for revenue analysis with new projects that were being developed so that we could look at them on a cumulative basis. I wanted to look at what was already approved, and add the costs and the water and everything together so that we would have an ongoing cumulative cost—we never got one, incidentally. They've gone back to that now and are beginning to get some cumulative figures.

When you stop and look at the overall picture, it's really kind of frightening. Proposition 6 was not the panacea that people believed. Ultimately, we reached the point where we just had to go to the voters for support for the fire department, the police department, and the city's budget. The city couldn't pay for those kinds of life-saving services in the community that are absolutely essential.

It has always been my contention that if the costs of new growth had been attached at the time that these projects were approved, it would've discouraged some of them. Those that it did not discourage would have had to agree to pick up those costs. Now, here we are again, talking about imposing these costs upon developers, and developers are fighting it like crazy—nobody still knows

how to deal with the needs that come up in the community. I mean, do we go for more school bonds, which we've already had? Do we use bonds to go out and bring water into the community to support more sewer expansion? No.

I thought that those new costs had to come from someplace else, thereby relieving taxpayers of an increasing burden. That would've been the way to go, because now the legislature has placed caps on local government because they decided in their wisdom that city governments had a lot of waste...I don't know how closely they examined their own efficiencies at the state level. But I never agreed with that.

I believe the legislature was too far removed from the problem to understand what *any* city's problems were. If they were trying to place limits on people's ability to raise income in a community, I think they should have imposed the same kind of limits on themselves. Spending for social services was to drop from about \$913,000 to \$644,000, and these cuts were going to come in things like Elderport and drug and child abuse programs. But Citifare was to keep quite a bit of money. Citifare was really just getting on its feet and depending heavily upon federal financing.

This was at the time in the Reagan administration when they were looking at a tremendous number of cuts, particularly in the area of social services, and the administration was also making state and local governments more responsible for their own financial support rather than getting these monies out of the federal government. The interesting thing about it was that nobody was paying a lot less money to the federal government—the monies were just being apportioned in a different way. The people on local levels have to understand that in the end they're not better

off at all, and really have a lot less to say about how their monies are being spent I think that there was a mood at that time that still prevails to some extent today. government should not be in the business of providing social services. I think that we have seen enough of the negative impacts of the government *failing* to deal with social problems to know that it is in the city's best interest to look after the concerns of a community.

In May of 1981, Reno withdrew from the Regional Planning Commission. In April, the city approved its own planning commission. Sparks also withdrew from the planning commission. They formed their own planning department so they could be responsible for their own future. Reno had decided at that point in time that we, too, wanted the same options. It was inappropriate for the Washoe County Commission that had the final say over the Regional Planning Commission to make determinations for the city of Reno. It was also true that the Washoe County Commission at that time had a very pro-growth attitude, which certainly seemed to be changing the city of Reno.

Many people who were appointed to boards and commissions had been recommended by the mayor with the city council's approval. But that isn't true of all boards and commissions. The planning commission was one of the exceptions, because that was written into the ordinance that created the commission. So each council member was to appoint one person with full council approval. At that time I made a list of who they were, and it sort of reminded me why things remained the status quo as much for the next couple of years.

Ted Osgood, who was an engineer, was appointed to the planning commission by Dick Scott. Engineering is closely associated with development interests, and he was a

member of the Homebuilders Association. I didn't know much about him, and I don't think a lot of us did.

Vi Sprenger, who was a licensed contractor and a licensed architect, had done a considerable amount of developing in the area, and he was appointed to the commission by Thornton. This was when the new council came in in 1981.

Janice Pine appointed a vice-president of the Pioneer Citizen's Bank Harry Zuehlsdorff. And Florence Lehnert, with my encouragement, appointed Steve Francis, who passed away. It was a terrible shame. He was a hardworking member of that planning commission. I appointed Kathryn Wishart, and Pete Sferrazza appointed Hill Moon, a member of the black community in Reno.

Bill Moon's record on the planning commission was one of consistent approval of growth in the area. I had good working relations and close ties to the black community, and I think I understood where he was coming from, though I certainly wasn't happy about it. Bill's idea was that blacks needed employment, and he felt the good paying jobs were to be found in the construction industries. Well, there's some truth in that, but in my discussions I was never able to convince him that those things are so *temporary*—if they're building hotel-casinos and they're building fast-food joints, when this building is no longer going on, then where do they go to work?

I never felt then and don't feel now that they were doing the black community any great service supporting the kinds of projects that Bill voted for. David Howard, who had been an assistant secretary of state, had indicated to me that he was very supportive of what I was trying to do with growth. I found out later that in my opinion, at least, he certainly spoke with a forked tongue. He

became more and more pro-growth, and just obstinately so. Joe McClelland was the one that appointed Mr. Howard, and with his voting record, I should have expected that. Joe would not have recommended someone who thought as I did.

That was the composition of the initial planning commission, and the result of the recommendations that came out of it closely paralleled the make-up of that commission, and the people who appointed them. [laughs] Steve Francis and Kathryn Wishart were the loners on there, just kind of sitting back and not able to accomplish what they hoped. Steve Francis was an early chairman. He was a very forceful guy, and I think that he was able to make some inroads into the thinking on that commission. But generally speaking it was just business as usual.

During my administration there was a rumor—which I've never been able to prove—that some people in town had put up \$10,000 to remove me from office. They never stopped their efforts to discredit me. They gave up trying to do it personally because they knew they couldn't. But they just harped at my policies on growth constantly. I think that a lot of those people decided the best way to get me out of there was to get me down to the governor's office.

We were approaching the end of 1982, and the elections were over and Dick Bryan had been elected governor by that time. I was a Democrat and I had supported him personally—not publicly. He was my personal choice. Because the mayoral office was non-partisan, I didn't endorse any partisan offices, but certainly personally he had my support and he knew it.

I had a call from one of his top aides one day. He said he'd heard that I was interested in serving in the Bryan administration. As a

matter of fact, I had given it some thought. John had had to take a medical disability, and my \$10,000 salary was not going very far. We were both in our sixties by then—John in his late sixties—and our future was not very secure economically. I really felt I had to do something. I knew I wasn't going to run for reelection. I couldn't afford to, though I had not said it publicly. I had said that I might not run, but I did not come out and make a flat declaration.

At any rate, apparently the word that we were having financial problems did get around. I got this call, and I said that I probably would be interested in serving in Dick's administration. As a matter of fact, I was glad to receive the call, because it wasn't something I would have asked for. They said they'd get back to me, and the word leaked out somehow that I was being considered for a job with Dick's administration. Ultimately I did accept a job down there in the Youth Services Division at better than three times the salary that I was making in city hall, which at the time was extremely valuable to us.

I really felt terrible about leaving office early, but my first responsibility has always been to my family. John had never been able to work from the day he had his heart surgery in 1979. It was hard for us at \$10,000 a year. We had to do something. We'd been prudent and had managed to put some savings away, but it wasn't sufficient. We were just surviving.

It was a very painful decision, but it was one I had to make. I told the governor that I was interested, and that was my reason for going. But there was a rumor about it, even before a job was offered to me. I said, "They contacted me, I didn't contact them." Anyway, they really wanted me out of town, and the development interests wanted to make sure I didn't run for office again. There were probably some other business interests, too,

some of which disliked me personally, some of which didn't want me at city hall. There were plenty of those around.

I had occasion to talk to Dick Scott, who was serving on the council at that time. I told him that I had received an offer from the Bryan campaign, and he said that he knew. He strongly implied that he had been the mover and shaker on getting that done, which kind of bothered me because then I thought, "What is going on? What do we have—casino interests that are interested in getting me out of here, or is Dick really concerned about my finances? Does he want to help?" Dick Scott worked for Bob Cashell who was lieutenant governor at that time. Cashell and Bryan were not exactly "bosom buddies." I did feel that it was necessary to talk to the governor about it. I wanted his opinion on whether Dick Scott had, in fact, been instrumental in doing me this great big favor. Governor Bryan assured me that he had *not*. Dick Scott was a funny guy. He's a very likable guy, but in my opinion, Dick Scott sees himself as a kingmaker—someone behind the scenes. It wasn't just an impression I had from working with him at city hall.... When we went down to the governor's inauguration, they had just so many chairs sitting up on the stage for people who were going to speak and the newly elected state officials. Of course, Bob Cashell was there. While a chair had not been provided for him, Dick Scott still stood on the stage.

WITH THE NEVADA YOUTH SERVICES, COMMON CAUSE, AND THE ETHICS COMMISSION

I began my new job as deputy administrator for the Youth Services Division in Carson City on January 3, 1982, which was about a week or two after I left the mayors job. I was hired as the deputy director. There were a number of comments made that I had always been so involved with seniors and cared about them. I was serving on several boards dealing with seniors' issues and had a governors appointment down there.

When my term ran out and the county was taking over that board, I applied to be reappointed, but the county turned me down. All I can do is speculate. I guess publicly elected officials are not too happy about people who are no longer in public office taking shots at them. [laughs] Especially those with a big mouth like I have.

There were things that I felt I could really contribute to what the seniors needed and the way things should be done. But I figured, "Well, there's no sense in fighting another battle at this point in time." So I let it go.

But there had been comments made about why, when I had been so involved with the seniors, was I appointed to the Youth Services Division? They saw that as being strange, but perhaps it was because of my childhood—which I had never discussed publicly before this—that I had an interest in youth as well as seniors. I found the work with the youth to be absolutely fascinating—I loved it.

The man who was in charge of the Youth Services Division had not been reappointed and was leaving. But he was still there when I arrived. I admitted to him that I didn't know anything about the Youth Services Division, and asked him what to do. He told me about looking things up in files and about records to get into, and he was willing to talk about these things. He had been a professional in this line, so he was a good man.

At any rate, I can never do anything halfway. I'm that way whether it comes to cutting a lawn or cooking a meal or being mayor...when I get into something, I go whole

hog. I did in this job, too. One of my duties was to gather, collate, and make recommendations based on information.

For the most part, the Youth Services Division dealt with probation and parole; it dealt with kids who had been in trouble; it dealt with kids who were not in trouble but were being placed in foster homes. It also dealt with a lot of abused children. Child care came under it as well, which was an interest of mine and had been when I was at city ball. But the kids that I had the most emotional feel for, I guess, were the kids that were being placed in foster homes, many whom were going through home after home after home. They didn't find any reason or explanation for this with the kids that were being placed in our institutions: the boys up at Elko and the girls down in Caliente.

After a while of dealing with the statistics and putting these things together, a lot of things just hit me between the eyes. For instance, the boys that were being sent up to the Youth Services institution at Elko usually had more than one offense that would have been a felony had they been an adult. So they were being committed for serious offenses up there. (That place, incidentally, was run by a very good man.) When I looked at the statistics for the girls facility, I saw that the girls were *rarely* being committed because of serious offenses. They were being committed because of prostitution, alcoholism, running away, for being hard to handle—things that if you were an adult would not even be a crime. I really felt that there was a disparity and it needed to be looked into.

Chuck McGee, who's now a district judge, was the juvenile master at that time. He has always had such an interest in kids, and does to this day. The conclusion that I reached when I was down at Caliente was that we didn't need to be locking up girls who were

coming more often than not from abusive backgrounds, just because of this. They were more likely to turn toward criminal instincts because of being incarcerated like this. I was concerned, because at that time better than 50 percent of the girls were in the facility for alcohol and drug problems, but they didn't have a drug counselor and or an alcoholic counselor on the post.

I talked to Chuck McGee, Bob Fahrendorf, and one of the women from the district attorney's office. Bob Fahrendorf was the public defender at that time. We all worked on these kinds of things and talked about them. I felt that we needed to make a trip down to Caliente to see for ourselves, rather than just looking at numbers and abstracts. We made an unannounced trip, which the administration down there did not like. When we got there we did not allow ourselves to be herded in specific directions that they wanted us to go—we wanted to see what was happening. The place was clean, so I left really reassured on that count. But although the staff did try hard, I felt that they were professionally incompetent to deal with the problems of those kids. I think there was a consensus on that.

Another problem existed, though, which I discussed with Carlos Romo, who was then the director of Youth Services. It was my opinion that one of the main problems that we had was that there was no place to put these kids who were runaways, prostitutes, and truants. When one case went to court in which a girl was being committed to Caliente, I testified at the hearing and said that I didn't think that it was wise to do that. But the judge's question was a very valid one. It was, "Well, where do we put her?" What was needed was sort of halfway houses for these kinds of kids.

Chuck McGee now has this idea for something which is like a halfway house.

I'm not sure what he calls it, but it's for these kinds of kids so they can really be helped. He is someone that I've got to get in touch with soon to see if that's an area in which I can offer some help. I don't know whether I can, but I would like to be involved. The halfway house that Chuck has in mind is going to be right here in Washoe County. I think with the Chuck McGees of the world out there looking after kids, things have got to get better. I really am so impressed with him.

I sometimes had contact with foster parents. Occasionally a parent would come into the office if their kid was in trouble. I was also in touch with the kids when I went down to Caliente, but not often. What you see is a name on a piece of paper with the offense and the person's track record. To a certain extent I was involved in helping place children in foster homes. Good foster parents are very hard to find. I think maybe now the state provides the foster parents with sufficient monies to really take care of that youngster as if he were their own. They receive money for medical use, clothing allowances, food—for all of these kinds of things that are needed.

But sometimes people who volunteer to be foster parents really don't have that much interest in the children. They want the money. They feel they can make money off of these youngsters. That's why I say that good foster parents are hard to find. At the same time, you don't want to lose them when you find them. There are also countless cases of foster homes where children have been abused or molested. It's pretty hard to know these things. You can do a thorough investigation, but maybe that family never neglected, abused, or molested that child in the past. All of a sudden they're presented with an opportunity, and unfortunately, too often take advantage of it.

Clark County is way ahead of us in these kinds of things. They have better facilities and

more of this kind of halfway house thing, so they have alternatives in dealing with kids. They're way ahead of us in dealing with child abuse, too. They've had a center down there for years. So there are a lot of things that still need to be done here to protect kids, to give them a fighting chance of getting out of this lifestyle in which they, more often than not, have been forced by being poor.

In order for a halfway house to work, there would have to be a certain amount of trust between the adults and youth. In other words, if the youth wouldn't stay and accept the help that was offered, the alternative might be confinement. I assume that something of this nature has to be understood between the staff and kids in order for them to work. And there would have to be absolutely a very competent, well-trained staff. The kids also need to be accessible to family so that they can have a tie to parents who are interested enough to maintain it and want to help.

We have some good probation officers out in some of the small counties around here who work closely with these things. Some of them do good things locally, too, but it does cost some money to get things done. Unless the state's willing to put up the bucks for it, a lot of these things that *could* be done will not get done, and in my opinion, the state is not willing to put up enough money. That may be too broad a statement, because in my opinion, the problems that I've been talking about must first be brought to the attention of the governor. I don't know whether they were.

A significant savings could be realized by not incarcerating these kids. It's very expensive to lock them up, and alternative facilities would be far less costly and more effective. If the governor and legislature were informed of this fact, I think that they would go for it. It's in their own best interest to do so.

The National Judicial College at the university really helped me because I took several courses. There were also two- and three-day seminars that we attended. We learned how other states are dealing with some of these problems, particularly in the areas of foster parenting and dealing with parents' loss of control over their child and the court having to take over and be responsible for the kids. The National Judicial College has had a *number* of helpful seminars, and I presume it still does.

I left the Youth Services Division in January of 1984. There were a number of reasons why—John's health wasn't good. I really felt guilty about leaving home at 6:30 in the morning and not getting back until 6:00 or 6:30 in the evening I didn't *like* leaving him alone if something happened.

Another thing is I had a lot of trouble with my back. Matter of fact, I had back surgery many years ago. It doesn't take much to kick it out. The worst thing in the world is to be seated in a position for any period of time where you're limited in movement. That hour trip to work in the morning and another hour in the evening was causing *me* some health problems.

Another thing was I really disliked the red tape. I went through the director, who in turn went through the head of Human Services. *Then* if they decide that there is something the governor ought to know, it goes to him. It's frustrating. It's not like being mayor, where I could go storming into the governor's office or whatever! [laughs] I really liked the job. If it had been in Reno, I'd probably still be there—although with John's continuing problems, it might not have been possible—but there were just too many reasons for leaving. I did regret leaving, because I really enjoyed the job.

One group concerned with the issue of high spending is Common Cause. Common Cause was founded in about 1970 by John Gardner as a national organization and sort of a people's lobby kind of thing. A lot of their concerns parallel mine. I had been a member back in the seventies, but when things got a little tough financially...you didn't pay dues to all of these organizations that you did when things were sailing along. I dropped Common Cause for a while, and then got back to it because they were still doing the kinds of things that I believed in. They believe in ethics in government and they take on everybody—they don't care whether it's a Republican or a Democrat or who it is. They still do to this day. They have pushed hard for limiting PACs, and they expose anyone who they feel is abusing an elective office. I have great respect for them.

It was my privilege to serve with Archibald Cox. He's chairman of the board of Common Cause, and has been for a long time. I served on the national governing board, and he works with all of those people. I don't believe there is anyone in any party who does not respect Archie Cox. I think he has that kind of an image with the public.

I was chosen for the national governing board by national elections. The Common Cause members all over the country are sent a ballot with an explanation or little story on everyone that's running. I had been nominated by the local Nevada Common Cause in late 1983, I think. I was elected in 1985. That was absolutely one of the greatest experiences of my *life*, serving on that board. The people that were elected were so intelligent, so hardworking, so involved, so caring. It's not like going to almost any meeting where you get bored. The meetings always took off from the moment we'd get there with discussions and votes, recommendations and then

counterarguments...it goes on and on. They bring in representatives from the state levels to tell what's going on. So many state Common Cause groups have been responsible for meaningful ethics legislation and campaign finance laws that are good. They have played such an important role.

There are 60 people who serve on the governing board, and we meet quarterly. The terms are three years. You meet the most fascinating people—just wonderful people... *so bright*. Sometimes you just sit there in awe and listen to them. The governing board is very representative of all parts of the country, and all races. But in Nevada—and across the nation, to some extent—Common Cause has been unable to attract a lot of minorities into the membership. I don't know why, because certainly the kinds of things that they're involved in are those things that benefit minorities or young people. But they just haven't been able to really bring them in.

Joe Robertson, who is also from Common Cause, and I tried going up to the university to talk to some of the university students. They seemed to agree with us, but they didn't feel they had the time or the money or something to get involved. They'd rather let someone else do it. At that rate, Common Cause is not attracting enough young people, and I think that is a major concern.

During our board meetings, we obviously had a lot of discussion about PACS, which are special interest groups that donate money to candidates. Anybody that believes that money doesn't buy anything when you pour a lot into a campaign is naive. It's bull. I think someone who says that doesn't really believe it, but it *sounds* good to say it. Anybody who serves in office who says, "I took \$1,000, but that doesn't mean it's going to buy me anything," -is full of BULL. I've never known it to do otherwise.

I've never known of instances where either incumbents or candidates took monies from special groups and turned around and voted against their interests.

Along with discussing PACs, Common Cause talked about ethics in government. Civil rights has also been a big thing because it was the feeling of the majority of the governing board that civil rights were taking a *beating* in the Reagan administration, and that we really had to watch it cautiously.

Archibald Cox felt that it was important *not* to spread ourselves too thinly, and Common Cause has always remembered that. But there have been times when issues were so important to people, like Bark's nomination for the Supreme Court. A vote was taken as to whether we should get involved. It was a close vote because we had not been involved in that kind of thing before. But because it was one of the issues that would affect minorities, Common Cause people felt strongly about it. Bork had been questioned on certain things and apparently answered unsatisfactorily, or his track record was such that it scared Common Cause members. But it was a close vote, because of this idea of sticking only to a few things that we could deal with and be effective in.

I was state chair of Common Cause for two years, 1985 and 1986. We didn't have a president—only a chair. This was a year before and also a year during my national term. Each year, national Common Cause sends out a questionnaire dealing with the issues that had been before the board and were going to continue to be discussed during the next year. Reports and polls based on the questionnaire are given so that the board remains in constant touch with its membership, and we did that sometimes on a local level. During the two years I was on the state board, the

people of Nevada felt our main role should be dealing with ethics in government and doing something about campaign financing. So that's where our efforts were concentrated.

There are about 648 state members today and the basis of the membership is in Reno. The strength of Common Cause has been in Reno because of some *very* good people, starting with Merle Benet who was the first chairman. Some other people who are active included Gerald Prindiville, who's over in Carson City; Orland Outland; Marion Siever; Joe Robertson; Irving Sandorf.... They have been so active and so *loyal* to Common Cause for so many years, they make us feel guilty! They are the backbone of Common Cause.

During my term, we became very much aware that we were too much of a Reno organization, and we wanted to spread out, but people who are retired who belong to Common Cause don't always have the finances to travel statewide. (Common Cause was not a wealthy organization, although we'd been building a nice fund and reached the point where we really could afford to do a number of things.) The governing board was elected here, although the ballots were sent out statewide. We decided to really have a recruiting effort and stretch ourselves into Las Vegas. In order to do that, we felt the best way to go about it was to hire an executive director, which many other successful states have done. So that's the direction we went.

Our first executive director didn't pan out the way we had hoped that he would; Leola Armstrong was the unanimous choice to succeed him. She is the executive director of Common Cause in Nevada today. I have a tremendous amount of respect for her—she really gets things done. She agreed to serve on the board in the beginning and was a great contributor to it. Everyone is so pleased with the evolvment and the involvement

of Common Cause now in these issues statewide. We're going to be hearing a lot more from Common Cause in the future, too.

I'm not active in Common Cause now. I'm certainly philosophically supportive of them with whatever contributions we can make, because I believe in them. I think that they are now in a position to have a very strong voice in the legislature when it comes to the kinds of things they're interested in: ethics legislation, and campaign financing and restructuring. There are some elected officials in Las Vegas who have expressed an interest in that, and certainly Sue Wagner comes to mind once again. In the past she introduced legislation on this issue—or *tried* to. But it went nowhere. It's very difficult to get people who are elected and sitting in an office to agree to *toughen* standards for themselves. I don't know...maybe the only way to ever do it is going to be through initiative petitions.

National Common Cause sends out a tremendous amount of information, such as the information I requested on ethics legislation from cities all over the country. They have a research staff that is there that can provide local groups with just about any information, and if they don't have it, they'll get it for you. Common Cause is an action group.

Lobbying is a big thing in Washington with National Common Cause, and it is a big thing in all local state governments. They accomplish so many things. But these gaps are always out there when it comes to putting the final nail on that coffin that will really offer legislation that the public is entitled to have. "People's lobby" is a term that is sometimes used, but not always in a complimentary fashion. I don't know what's wrong with it, but there are those who seem to think there's something wrong with the people lobbying. Generally speaking, I think that Common

Cause is well respected on the national level. I think that anyone who wants to be fair recognizes that Common Cause takes on Republicans and Democrats alike—they don't care who it is. The membership is made up of both parties and independents, and they deserve respect. But I don't think the public knows enough about them.

I'm not active in Common Cause anymore, but I have started my second term as a member of the State of Nevada Commission on Ethics. We meet on an on-call basis. Whenever someone has an ethical question for the commission, they send a request to the chair, who is Carl F. Dodge. He is a hard-working chair. It's an active group, but we are very limited by law as to what we can deal with.

Most of us on the commission feel that there are things that we would like to be more involved in, but we are restricted because of the Ethics Law. It dictates what we're permitted to do and what we're not permitted to do. For instance, we have absolutely no authority where campaign contributions are concerned. The law says that you can issue an opinion, and the requesting party does not have to make that opinion public, but *can* if he or she so chooses. In my opinion, the problem with that kind of thinking is that obviously they're not going to make it public unless it's favorable for them to do so.... But most of the kinds of things that we're dealing with fall under these kinds of limitations—they are not covered under the law, and therefore we have no authority. The legislature was very specific in passing that law to *limit* the responsibility of the Ethics Commission.

The Commission was there in the past, but it was sleepwalking for so many years. It came back in the early 1980s, when Bryan was elected in 1982. But obviously it had to

be funded, and the legislature is the only one that can fund it, so there were people in the legislature who put up the necessary money to get it going again.

There are five people on the Commission. I was appointed initially by Sue Wagner, and I would guess that that would have been with the Governor's approval. Sue served on a committee to kind of reactivate this group and get it going again, I guess. The law spells out representation on the Commission—like, a former member of a city, government or county commission; so many from Las Vegas; and you can't have them from the same party. So there are some restrictions or limitations on who can serve on this thing. For instance, a Democratic governor couldn't have appointed an entirely Democratic board and vice versa.

REFLECTIONS ON NEVADA POLITICS

One of the things that I have always liked about Nevada is that it is a small enough state so that you could know your governors. I have known all the governors from Grant Sawyer on through Dick Bryan on a first-name basis. My sister just can't get over that, being from San Francisco. She says, "My gosh, you know the governor?"

"Well," I say, "*everybody* knows the governor, you know!" [laughs] That's one of the really nice things about Nevada: you can have easy access to almost any elected official. Obviously some officials on a local level are better about offering that access and some are a *lot* better about paying attention when you do. But you know your city council people; you know your county commissioners; you know your legislators. It's wonderful. If you've got something that you want to say to them, you know how to reach them, and you can talk to them in person. You can go down to the legislature; you can get them on the telephone; you can write them a letter, and they'll respond. There are not many communities or states that really enjoy that.

I don't have any problem with Nevada politics. We're a very split state. It's interesting because down at the legislature last session one house was Democratic and the other Republican. We had a Republican governor, Bob List, prior to Dick arriving there. So there doesn't *seem* to be any great effort to lock into a *party* situation. I really believe that more so than in most places, Nevada elects on the basis of the individual I think they cross party lines *a lot* to put the person in there that they want. I have a great deal of respect for a lot of people politically in this state. I think we've had some good elected representatives in Washington, and Nevada has had some really good governors since we've lived here.

I think that Mike O'Callaghan was a really fine governor. I think Grant Sawyer was a good governor...they all had different positive aspects to them. I think Dick Bryan is a good governor. I didn't know List as well, but I never had any problems with him. We always worked well together. I only met the lieutenant governor, Bob Miller, briefly. I don't know a lot about Bob, only what I've read in

the papers, and our meetings were too brief to really form any opinions of him. Therefore, I don't know what kind of a governor he'll make if he steps in for Richard Bryan.

But there are some other people I can think of that I like. For instance, there's Brian McKay, who is the attorney general of the state of Nevada. I think he's a *very decent* man. I don't know whether he can, but I know he would like to do something about ethics in government and about the spending situation. He was a speaker at a Common Cause banquet that we had. I guess you don't really consider these kinds of people as *friends*... acquaintances is what you are.

There are a lot of people in the legislature that I admire. I think Sue Wagner is absolutely marvelous. She's been there 16 years now, I think. She's able to be her own person. While the Republican party obviously has a more conservative agenda where people issues are concerned, Sue has still worked to meet the needs of the people in this state. If we're going to have a woman governor of this state sometime, she'd certainly be one that I would look strongly to support—even though I'm a Democrat and she's a Republican. It doesn't matter. We've worked together.

I've had a good rapport, good working relationships with most of the people down there in Carson City, although some come and go so quickly you barely get to know them. We've also been changing hands lately, as far as our Washington representatives are concerned. I endorsed Howard Cannon when he ran. There was a very good reason for that: Chic Hecht was his opponent. I did not support him then and I do not support him now. He represents the extreme right element in the state of Nevada, in my opinion.

I have not been happy with a lot of the votes that Chic Heck has cast in Washington.

During my visits back in Washington, the clear analysis of his abilities that came to me via the people that I met and talked with was that he was not doing Nevada any favors being our representative. I felt that way, too. Chic Hecht is running for the Senate again. I remember his campaign so well when he ran before. It was run by some people out of Southern California, and I think they knew that he was not the kind of man who ought to be exposed to the public if they wanted to get him elected. I'm serious. They hid him. You never saw him, and you're not seeing him again in this election. You're seeing all these people *talking* about Chic Hecht, but you are *not* seeing Chic Hecht. I think that that's very interesting, because I think that he owes it to the voters of the state of Nevada to say these things *himself* if he wants us to believe him.

I think Harry Reid will make a good senator. He's been in politics a long time. He was lieutenant governor; he served on the gaming board; he served in the legislature; he served in the House. So he has had the experience. I think we're seeing some benefits coming out of his election. He's putting a water thing together where he's calling all these people in and trying to negotiate some sort of a workable solution. It appears today that maybe they've reached some sort of understanding that will help a little. His hands are going to be tied, and so is the group that he's working with, because of laws that are involved. I think that he is a caring man and he's honest, but he's certainly not my idea of a liberal Democrat. I think he's a very moderate Democrat.

Barbara Vucanovich is beginning to *talk* about things now. [laughs] Barbara's votes obviously are not very compatible with mine. But that's not true in everything—sometimes I agree with her votes. She's like the rest

of us. When we enter public office, there's no training ground for a mayor...there's no training ground for your first trip back to Washington. I think that she's more articulate in the positions that she takes. I just don't happen to agree with them. And I *really* dislike political expediency where issues are concerned. Barbara Vucanovich has been in Washington two terms already, and now all of a sudden she's talking about child care because this has become a great selling point nationally.

I don't approve of the way that the Republicans think they can solve the problem. I think the problem is too acute. But they seem to believe that the private sector can solve everything, and it *can't*. I think that we've seen so much proof of this over the last several years. I don't understand why there is this thinking that everything that is healthy and good for this country comes from the private sector, and everything that is bad and rotten comes from government, no matter what level.

People who think like that figure that the government can run on fewer and fewer bucks, no matter what their level of income is. It could be decimated, and they'd still think that they could get by on less. People don't grant the same concessions to government that they grant to business. In other words, they don't let people who are elected *by* the people decide how the money can best be spent. *They* make those decisions for themselves, but they don't like the idea that government is free to make them. I really believe that government has an *obvious, necessary* role in a lot of elements of our democracy at local, state, and national levels. That may be the basic premise of the Democratic party, but it should be the basic premise of *democracy*, not just the Democratic party! I think that should

be a premise for Republicans, Independents, and everyone alike.

I'm not at all involved anymore with the Democratic party. There were times when I was somewhat active and did my turn in helping with conventions and serving on committees. I didn't exactly *give up*, because I still follow party politics, but I'm no longer active in it. I dislike party politics intensely. I dislike *Republican* party politics; I dislike *Democratic* party politics. There's an underlying reason: these *someones*—the political mucky-mucks in the state—get their heads together and they decide who they want to run for office. The people are not making that decision most of the time—somebody is making it for them. Certainly someone can drop into the race and run, but the parties know who they're going to support; who they will not actively support; who they *don't* want to see run. That's my problem with politics.

There is this power structure behind things that thinks they can *mold* a candidate to the platform of the party, whether it be Democratic or Republican politics. For example, they want someone to run for governor, but that person *strays* from the party line in one or two areas and they want that person brought back in line. That doesn't work for me. I certainly don't have a problem with all Republicans, and I certainly don't with all Democrats. But I think that there's too much of that.

When I came out of the Reno mayoralty primary victorious, there were a bunch of big-wheel Democrats who met in Vegas. They wanted to know what the hell they were going to do about that crazy woman up in Reno who just might win the general election. [laughs] That's the sort of thing I'm talking about. In the first place, they want somebody that they

think can win, and it wasn't until after the primary that they realized I might. So I didn't *scare* them any until then. I know that *they* sensed that I was *not* the kind of person that they could mold into their own image. It's my opinion that they don't like to deal with those things. That's why I don't like party politics.

Nevada's special interests which prevail are probably worse than those in Washington, D.C. They are the ones that have the money. they are the ones that have always been a part of the power structure; they are the ones that got us where we are *today*. And they will keep us there if we don't strive to change it.

I believe that one of the big problems in government today at all levels is that we simply do not trust our elected officials. Until the day comes when elected officials are willing to go these extra steps where ethics and government are concerned, we are not going to change what is happening in government today. You do it by speaking out *constantly*, but you don't say one thing to the public one time and another thing the next. If you tell them you're not going to take special interest money, you don't take it. You tell them that we have a problem with air pollution—they're not stupid, they can look outside and see that it's a problem, and they know what's causing it. They want someone to tell them that they're willing to do something about these problems. But it's hard to get these kinds of people to run in an election. I am an exception, sad to say.

When Ronald Reagan was sworn in in 1980, the country began a move toward becoming ultra-conservative, ultra-right-wing. I'm conservative in very many ways, but this was an ultra-right-wing swing. I think Nevada is one of the most right-winged states in the nation today. That process has been a

gradual one, and I wish I could account for it, but I can't.

I happen to personally believe that this is the most corrupt administration in Washington, D.C., in the history of this country. They're all getting rich off one another. The ethics questions *are* there, regardless of Oliver North and Ed Meese, who heads up the *justice* system in this country. Then there's the Pentagon. We have been starving our social programs to build up our military, and now we find that probably as much as billions could have been going into the pockets of crooked people who have used crooked politicians, or they couldn't have achieved this. I think that a reaction to this type of politics is what got me elected mayor in 1979.

I wish that the world, the city, and the state were full of people who want to run for office only because they want to serve—not because they hope to gain any personal or financial advantage from it. There are some of those around and we *have* to find them. We have to do something *legally* to *stop* this proliferation of PACs and the spending of money to run for office, because it's absolutely asinine.

Let's say I wanted to run against Vucanovich—and this is not to say that I do. How do you raise the money to do that? I was elected mayor because I could essentially still walk the city of Reno. When you get to looking at a statewide broad-scoped office, you can't confine it to where you can walk. You've got to have money. Anyone running for office should be able to do that on the basis of contributions from people who live within the state... from those people you're going to represent. But I think that limitations absolutely must be placed on campaign spending. They say that there are some legal niceties about this that are

very troublesome. They say that you can't stop people from giving any amount of money that they want to a candidate unless it is prohibited by federal election laws. But the lawyers that I've talked to *seem to believe* that you can limit expenditures. And if you limit expenditures, then a candidate for office has no reason to go around collecting all the money that they can get their hands on..

We've got all these splits now. We've got labor unions giving to Democrats, and we've got big business giving to Republicans, and occasionally they play both ends. They give to both sides so that their butt is covered no matter who's elected. But the democratic process is not supposed to work that way, because what it amounts to is that we're buying public office. It's open to the highest bidder.

EPILOGUE

I've always been extremely competitive, and it didn't matter whether I was competing with men or women. I think that *that* gets you over any fear of competition, whether it's in a debating arena or playing a game. However, there were disappointments I experienced as mayor. One disappointment was the fact that I never was able to get the kinds of information from our planning staff that I saw as being critical to a really sane growth policy with which we could live comfortably. I didn't want anything cast in stone, but instead something that could be changed if a better thing came along. But I never was able to get the cumulative information I wanted. In other words, we had a lot of projects backed up. When I go to review a new project, I want to know exactly what resources it will require—what kind of traffic it will generate, the need for new police officers, new fire stations, new schools, new parks, all of the streets. Can we handle it?...can we afford it?

The planning staff should have been doing that. But the planning staff takes its orders, presumably, from the city council and

I was sitting in a position where obviously not everyone agreed with me on the Reno City Council. To this *day*, they do not have sufficient information on which to base a decision to approve or disapprove a project.

It is painful to look back over a lot of this, because I really was not successful in accomplishing what I wanted to. When I see what's happening today, I realize how tragic it is. I don't know...if there had been some other way to do it, I didn't know what it was.

One thing I would like to see more of, which has been a major disappointment, is voter turnout. It has been a huge problem in local government. When people really care about a community, how they can stay home on election day is beyond me—I don't care whether it's a city, county, state, or federal election. Their voice is cast with their vote. I would certainly like to see someone in a public role today attempting to encourage more people to vote.

It's hard to say what I'm proud of. One of the things was the state award that I got

from Common Cause for leadership in the public interest. It was rewarding and brought me great pride. That was in 1980. Then two years later, I received the National Governing Award from National Common Cause. It was one of five national awards for leadership in the public interest. Names are submitted from all over the country for that. All of the states submit names, along with why people are being nominated for this. I was one of five chosen, and I'm *extremely* proud of that. I was shocked, because I didn't think anybody knew about a little old lady from Reno, Nevada.

As to my accomplishments while mayor, getting the ethics law passed was important, but I think more importantly at that time, the first and best thing that I did for Reno was to really establish the Reno Planning Commission and our planning staff. I didn't do that alone, obviously. That was something on which the early council and I agreed, and we got it.

Another thing I'm proud of is that I have made a very persistent on-going insistence to label what water we have, and to not approve anything for which we do not have sufficient water. As time goes on, I think I'm more and more often being proven accurate in my assessments of things that are going to come down the road if we do not deal with water availability as a serious element of planning. Here we are—still trying to deal with it, and the situation is far more critical.

The thing that maybe I ought to take the greatest pride in, and I do feel very good about, is bringing the public back in to a very strong and meaningful role in city government. They became active and showed up at meetings at city hall. It didn't sway the votes normally, because here we were still sitting with the development forces on one side and the people on the other. The public was really getting involved, and they have *remained*

involved. You still see neighborhood groups functioning around town. You see them showing up at council meetings expressing their approval or disapproval of things.

I did make recommendations and in numerous instances was able to get people appointed to boards and commissions. The people represented a broad cross-section of the community. One of these boards was CPPAC—the Citizens Planning and Policy Advisory Committee. I also established very good working relationships with the minority communities in town. I don't think that that ever had been done before.

When I arrived in office, I think people had high hopes that someone was really going to be doing what they promised them to do when they ran for office. And I did that. Everyone knew I was honest. There was never any question about it, and the opportunities for dishonesty are rampant in any government. I was able during those three-and-a-half years that I was there to really give the public a sense of an elected official's honesty, integrity and ethics...to let them know that they really mattered for something in this city, and that their opinions on what they wanted their city to be was as important to me as it was to them.

I never ran for office to get rich, but I would have liked to have made enough so that I could have stayed. Maybe that's why no one was willing to raise the salary. [laughs]

There's been a substantial increase in diversifying the economic base in the community. This has to be beneficial in view of the fact that we're seeing the potential for gaming being discussed in a lot of other communities, such as Atlantic City, and various lotteries in states like California. What that says to me is that we no longer have an exclusive claim where gaming is concerned.

We're going to have to share this, which means that we're probably going to lose some of these tourists to other communities. I also believe that the national economy is a factor in how gaming does.

I think that it has always been fairly dear, as far as economic diversification is concerned, that Nevada has a lot of plusses. We have no corporate tax, we are a freeport state, we have no personal income tax, and I know that when we discussed with business people the positive aspects of Nevada as far as economic diversification was concerned, those were the kinds of things that were important to them. It was also important to a lot of those people that we show an indication of the willingness to move away from making gaming the absolute major source of economy in this state. I think there's been a great deal of success.

Because of the freeport law, we've had a substantial warehousing industry, and that has grown a great deal. It's grown to where we no longer have the industry just catering to smaller-type businesses. We've had a General Motors plant that's come in, as well as Porsche...every day now you pick up the paper and read about a new industry that is moving into the area, and very often it falls into that category of business. But we're also still attracting a lot of other types of industries, and a major factor in that has been EDAWN. It has brought business people together that were interested in economic diversification. Since its founding it has really continued to thrive and has been very effective.

It is still my strong belief that we have not paid sufficient attention to how we make our available resources fit with any kind of growth, whether it be economic diversification or continued expansion of the gaming industry. I don't believe that that has been addressed sufficiently *yet*.

I was interviewed by the *Gazette* in November of 1980. We discussed the growth issue, and, of course, gaming. A lot of casinos have closed in Reno since then, so that indicates that the gaming industry is also vulnerable. Most of the casinos that have closed have been individually owned and operated—small-type casinos. It's really sad because that's the sort of thing that Reno was built on: the economy of the small casinos. The small casinos were really having trouble surviving, much the same as the motel operators.

I believe that corporate gaming is essentially healthy. The large hotels like Circus Circus and the Nugget in Sparks have been well run and operated. The Nugget has had almost exclusive rights in the Sparks area, and it is succeeding very well.

There's been a move from years ago, when there were 5- and 10-cent slot machines that brought in a lot of seniors who couldn't afford to play dollar slots, or even the 25-cent machines. Those machines literally supported gaming in this community for many years. I suppose that economic necessities were the reason for the changes to more expensive machines, so that overhead costs could be paid and a profit could be made. I know even when I was in office I had groups of people from around Roseville and Sacramento, California—particularly seniors clubs—that used to get a busload and come up here. They used to come up and enjoy playing the nickel and dime slot machines. They said it became more and more difficult to have their money last long enough so they could have a little fun and go home. But obviously the gaming community felt that the nickel and dime players were not what this community needed. As a matter of fact, an attitude seemed to develop that we needed to get away from the small-time attitude and move towards

the direction that Las Vegas successfully had taken.

I had always hoped that we would never become a city like Las Vegas. I think that's why a lot of us love the place, and we didn't want to see another Las Vegas here. Yet, today we're seeing this comparison between how much Las Vegas is growing and how many hotel-casinos they have, compared to our somewhat slower rate of growth. I think the comparisons are very unfair. The population down there wants this kind of expansion. When it comes time for them to deal with the water problems and the cost of it, then it's up to the people of that community to make a decision. They have apparently decided that they don't mind all this growth scattered all over the community in hotel-casinos. But the people in Reno made it clear they didn't want that

There was an article in the paper where someone said that Las Vegas casinos do so much more for their community than Reno casinos do. Certainly, the person who wrote the article probably didn't have any clear indication of what local casinos did in the way of community service or community contributions dollar-wise. I think now that maybe as a result, a lot of the casinos are making community contributions—more than they were advertising. I think also that there is a greater generosity on the part of the casinos in the community. I sense that they are contributing more now to social programs and things than has ever been true in the past.

Redevelopment in the downtown area has been so much slower than I expected it to be. Progress can only be measured in inches, in my opinion. For instance, we've had these corners down there that have been the cause of a lot of disputes and arguments in the community because they were so slick that people have slipped on them. The city is still working on these corners.

Several months ago there was some money appropriated from the downtown redevelopment fund to improve the alleys in downtown Reno. It wasn't two weeks when that alley work was underway. That was because the alleys run between casinos down there, and those people are in a position to exert some pressure to get this work done. Well, I guess it was six weeks—no longer than eight weeks—that some of the alleys were completed. One alley that runs north and south between Harold's and Harrah's was finished in nothing flat. Now if we can finish an alley that fast so that we don't inconvenience gaming patrons, why can't we finish these street corners? That slowness really puzzles me.

Another thing that is bothering me is that I am not seeing *beautification* in Reno. There should be some greenery and some nice benches and areas where people can sit out and have lunch...a break away from the casinos for a bit, where they'd be breathing some fresh air. I am disappointed that this hasn't happened. Obviously Reno has been cleaned up. But if we still have as many absentee landowners in the downtown area as we did when I was in office, we're going to continue to have a problem with preserving whatever we do down there. Unless the property owners are willing to be responsible for keeping the front of their areas cleaned and beautified, we're going to continue to have a problem.

The long-time business people in Reno have always taken good care of their property, I think, because they face the public. I don't get downtown that often anymore, so maybe they've made progress beyond that which I'm aware of. As far as the downtown buildings are concerned, I think there are more restrictions in the building code now than there were at the time of the construction of Circus Circus.

Once a year the newspaper runs “The Best and Worst of Reno.” In the downtown, Circus Circus has won the most ugly building and for many years...I kind of lost track of it. It isn’t something I’m proud of. I think Circus Circus is gaudy, and it certainly doesn’t add to beautification of downtown Reno.

I have always had mixed feelings over water meters. I really understand that they are a tremendous conservation method. However, in fact they do not generate an additional drop of water. They are a conservation method because they are compelling the existing population to use less water. Now, while the population has continued to grow, this year Sierra Pacific allocated about an acre-foot per family. Then the allocation dropped to three-quarters, and now it’s down below that. If they get their way, I feel that we’re soon going to be down to about one-fifth of an acre-foot, which is going to create more problems than we have.

I have a lawn out there and I have trees. I’ve been growing them for 18 years at this location. They provide a certain aesthetic satisfaction for me, but they also provide oxygen and cooler air. But we’re seeing people removing trees and lawns, and planting rock and what-have-you. That isn’t the kind of community that I want to live in, quite frankly. I believe that we can all be very conservative in the use of water while still maintaining our gardens and lawns. For instance, I do a lot of drip watering, but we are absolutely at the mercy of the weather, and we have a terrible drought situation this year.

A lot of people in other communities meter their water. The cost to install the meters would also be over \$300, I heard. So you have a substantial investment just in the water meter. We’ve seen the result of water meters in other communities like Mann

County and San Francisco. Water was scarce, but the smaller amount of water the people used, the more the cost was. That was because the water provider there felt that they had to have a certain amount of income. That same thing would be a cinch to happen here. If they were selling less water than they needed to make their 14 percent profit that they were allowed, they’d raise the cost for water. So eventually we’d be using less water, and it would cost us more to do so. That scenario has always troubled me, so I’ve always felt that one of the solutions, if they want water meters, was to have the purveyor in the area provide them.

The other thing that I do not believe is that profits should be made through *passing* associated costs on to everybody. I do believe that water *should* be metered during drought times when it’s really in everyone’s best interest, but at other times, when that water is rushing down the river and we have no shortage, metering water is wrong.

Many people come to our community who really don’t have an interest in the water shortage, like the people who come and stay in the casinos. But I think that the responsibility lies with the casino operators. For instance, during this drought and the one in 1977, water was not served in restaurants and such unless you asked for it. Yet at the time I recall being in one of the hotels, where they constantly ran the water in the bar. And here we were at home, putting bricks in our toilets and restricters on our showers. But the tourists are not even familiar with the problem, and are not interested, and how can you expect them to be?

My attitude long before I was elected and through today is that people who are responsible for making those kinds of decisions in the community—in this case the Reno City Council—*should not ever* allocate

growth of *any* kind that is in excess of the resources that are available to them. If they have 1,200 acre-feet of water, and they allocate it all to one project, then what should happen? In my opinion, if they think that project is so important, but they have nothing to allocate, then they shouldn't approve anything more until the purveyor of water has x-number more gallons of water in the area.

I was so active for so many years, sometimes at the expense of family gatherings—especially when I was mayor. I really needed to get back to the family and have more time with my grandkids and with everyone. I needed less political involvement in my life. You really get a bit burned out after all the years, but I maintain an absolute interest in politics, in the people who serve in office, and government at all levels.

I have very strong opinions as far as my political philosophy is concerned, and it has probably been apparent throughout this entire oral history. I have a personal philosophy to live by: I have always refused to do anything that would make me feel uncomfortable or that I would not like myself for. If I can't like myself, I don't think anyone else can like me. I've tried to be fair, honest, and caring. I care about a lot of things and a lot of people. I think that as Americans, it's our responsibility to care about others, so when we can contribute to organizations or causes that we feel are important, we do so.

Philosophically, I'm a fiscal conservative, obviously, because I've always had to be. In my personal life I'm also fiscally conservative. I believe that an elected official has a responsibility to handle the public's money as carefully and as wisely as they're willing to handle their own, so I'm conservative in that sense. I'm conservative about some other

things that I've taken some heat over. [laughs] I can recall when we had this really high unemployment dear back in the late 1970s, early 1980s, and we had a lot of aliens coming into the country. I know what the Statue of Liberty says, and we've always opened our arms to people from other countries. But at that time I felt—and said so publicly—that it was very unwise to bring in all of these people at that time when we did not have the means for looking after our own.

I believe that a country is only as strong as its people are willing to make it strong. If you destroy a country from the inside out—if you have so many poor; so many unhoused; so many people who lack medical care; so many people who work, only to never get that other foot up the ladder—you have a population that may not be there when you need them some day. If you want these people to fight for this country, believe in it, work for it, to speak positively of it, then every segment of our society is entitled to the same respect and the same opportunities. I'm sorry to say that I still don't believe that they all are. I think there are a lot of things that need to be worked on, and if that's a liberal attitude, I certainly make no apologies for it.

One of the main problems I have with the Reagan administration is that they say that we have not structurally harmed the country, but I disagree—I believe that we have. If you have a country where the infrastructure is falling apart... The government is not putting up the monies out of a trust fund to take care of the highways, for example. I don't believe that the philosophy of our founding fathers was to do away with a lot of things that belong to the people by selling them off to private industry. It's certainly not my philosophy. If something is owned by the people, it ought to stay in the hands of the people, unless they give the

government permission to do otherwise. Our system of government unfortunately does not say that it's necessary to go to the public and ask them if they want to sell part of their public parks so someone can chop timber, or put a housing unit in. I feel very strongly about those things. Infrastructure also includes things like water. The entire West, especially, is in the midst of one of the worst droughts ever experienced in history, and obviously something has to be done to solve the water problems. Local governments cannot afford it, so help has to come from the federal government, in my opinion.

On the national level, taxes have been reduced, and I suppose you can make a successful argument for that if you're talking in certain areas. Some people have certainly been helped a lot more than others. But I believe that the upper strata of people in this country have been helped *far* more than the middle class or the lower middle class under the Reagan administration. That's inarguable. Things hurt. They want to take government off the backs of people? Well, they don't mind putting government on the people's backs in certain ways, like wire taps and forced testing for drugs. I believe if our constitution says anything, it says that those things are illegal. I can say that knowing full well how important it is to deal with the drug problems in the country. But when you're willing to wiretap and to see the kinds of things that we've seen in Washington with people *personally* benefiting.... Those all really run against my philosophical cord.

If there were some way to be a part of the political scene and decision-making process while still fulfilling my other responsibilities, I would still like very much to be involved. But I have no guilt about not being involved, because we all have our priorities. When our

kids were growing up, John and I would tell them, "Your family is everything. You've got brothers and sisters in school. Look after them, because you're going to have your family your whole life. It's the *only* thing in your life that is going to be constant if you will let it be."

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